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the future of video gaming

collector's edition

TOMB RAIDER

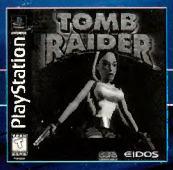
8 pages of comprehensive strategy the whole game in 1 issue!

50 Best PlayStation Games

the box that rocks

- Resident Evil 2
- Tobal No. 1
- Final Fantasy VII
- Jet Moto
- Cool Boarders
- Spider
- Tenka
- Rally Cross
- Net Yaroze

Complete Strategies for these games...



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And if you plan to survive, you're going to have to battle the enemy with your agile wits. Uncover the powers that lie deep in the ruins. Discover what it

UNLESS YOU CAN UNFOLD THE MYSTERIES OF THE WASTE

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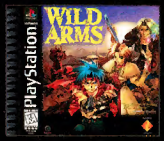
takes to conquer Metal Demons. And no, the ultimate goal of your quest is not to save the princess. It's to save the planet. Good luck. You're gonna need it.

LAND, YOU'RE GOING DOWN WHETHER YOU'RE READY OR NOT



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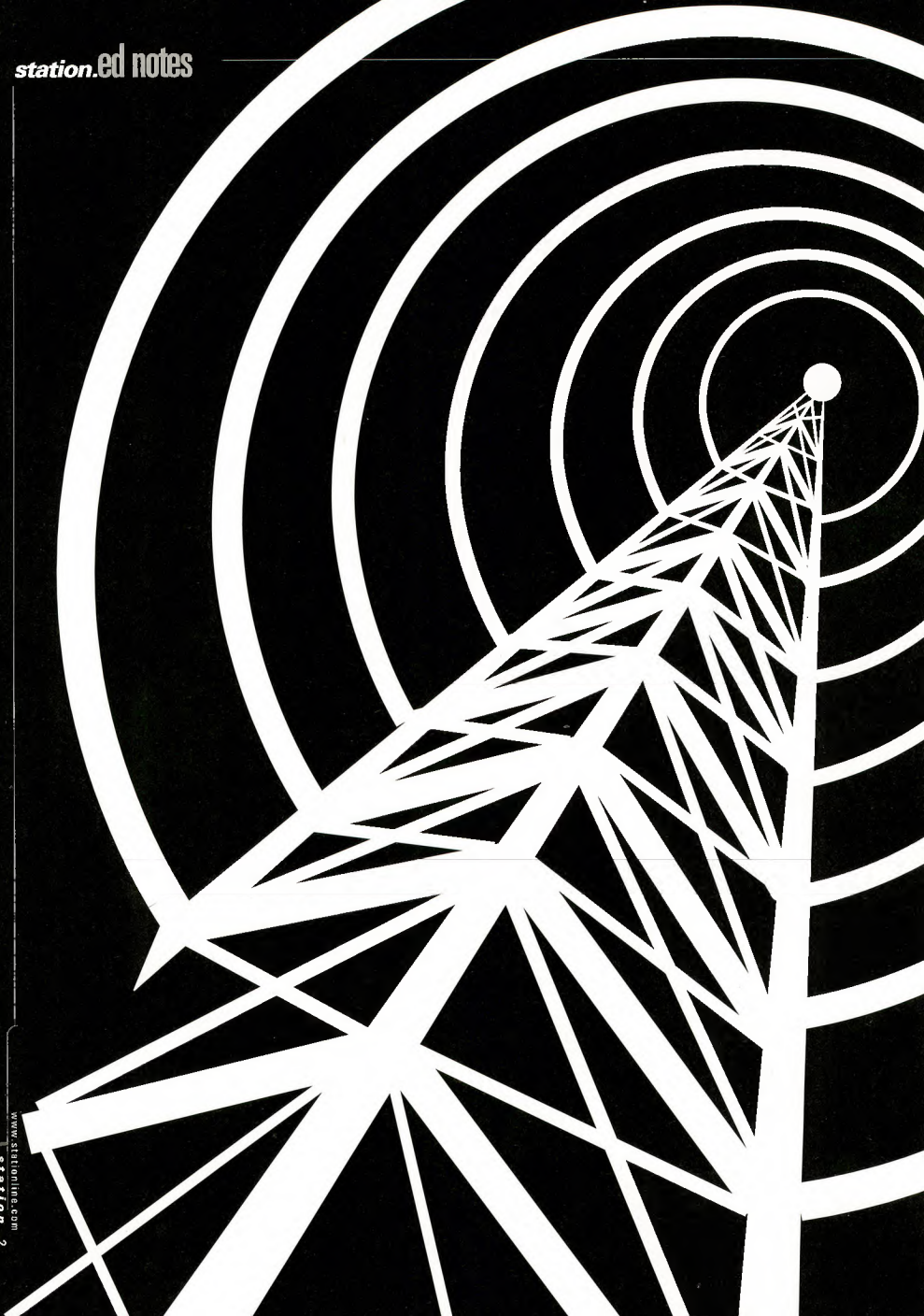

The TV here in the *station* office is loaded with 150 cable channels, movies on demand, and Internet pumped in over the wire. Still, with all these entertainment options available, we think the most thrilling thing on television sits on *top* of the monitor. We're talking about the Sony PlayStation console, overflowing with dazzling sights and sounds and all the action you can stand. It's clearly the most versatile interactive experience ever to shake up a living room.

OK, so it's just a video game system...or is it? After all, do you know of any other game box that offers such a huge range of gaming features? Only one console comes to mind. Where else can you find a system that delivers exciting full-motion video sequences, state-of-the-art graphics and audio, and arcade-quality controls?

The PlayStation is definitely the "top box" for dedicated gamers, with an extensive library of games already in place. Our premiere issue contains comprehensive coverage of these amazing games (and there are lots of them, from death-dealing shooters to engrossing RPGs). The Sony PlayStation covers every facet of videogame entertainment—and *station* will cover every aspect of the PlayStation.

In addition to our no-nonsense reviews and previews of new and upcoming titles, this issue also includes extensive strategy features that take you deep inside three of the hottest games around: *Twisted Metal 2*, *Cool Boarders*, and *Tomb Raider* (we cover all 15 levels of *Tomb Raider* in this one article!).

This first issue of *station* also contains our 50 Best List, ranking the top games produced for the console. This was no easy task; great games continued to pour in even after we'd made our final decisions. And for those of you who really get into gaming (or want to get into it), see our news story on Net Yaroze, the only development system/network that lets gamers create their own PlayStation titles.

We'll broadcast the PlayStation experience better than any other magazine, so tune in now—and turn on to *station*. Our goal is simple: give you the most complete information possible to make the smartest game purchasing decisions—and once you've made your purchase, we want to help you get the most out of those games. The PlayStation has inspired us, and we're determined to do our job as well as it does.

Vince Matthews
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

station

station

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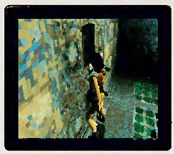

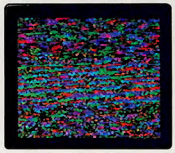

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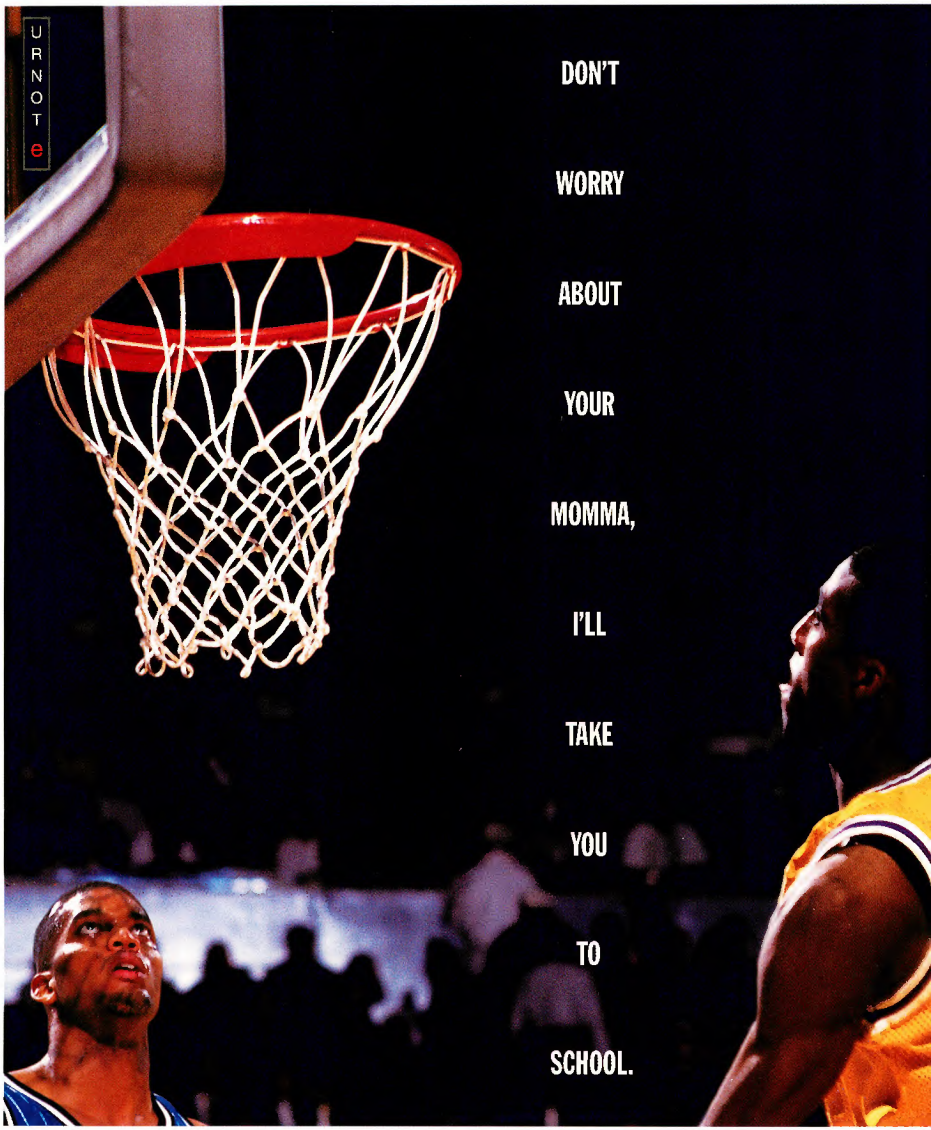

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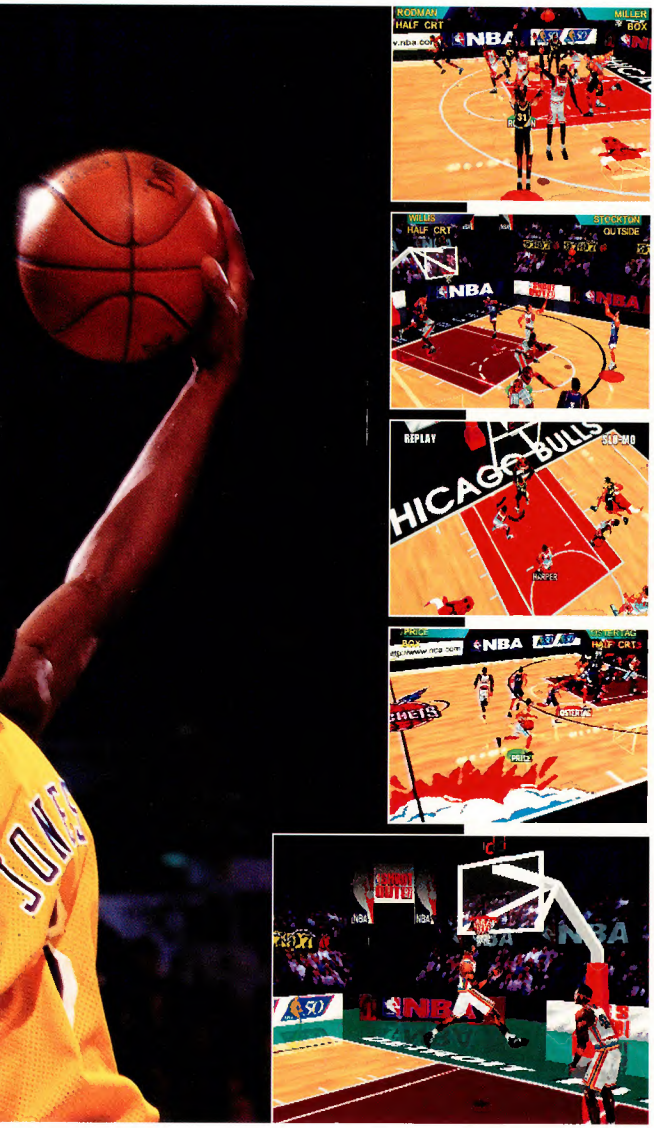

Camaraderie. Brotherhood. Sportsmanship. That's what NBA Shoot Out '97 is all about. Oh, victory has its spoils, but they're not as rewarding as the shared fellowship one feels after capping off a drive to the hole with a towering Tomahawk Jam. Particularly when you're jammin' on Ewing, Malone or Olajuwon. And now, with revolutionary Icon Passing,™ you can execute pinpoint passes that would make Payton, Kidd or Hardaway jealous. Plus, new motion capture will make all your moves appear much, much smoother. And faster. So if you're going to demonstrate the pump fake, fade-away jumper or the flying windmill, you'll want to perform them over and over again so students of your game don't miss any fine points. **NBA Shoot Out '97. Don't let it mess with your head.**

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Key Table: Explaining the **station** system

Every game falls into a particular genre. However, some titles combine certain elements from several categories. For these special cases, you might see several icons displayed to describe the game genre. In this section we explain our classification system.

Action

Action games, by their very nature, are difficult to categorize. In essence, every game is an action game (or at least it better have action if it wants to compete in today's cutthroat marketplace). Nowadays, in their efforts to come up with fresh, original products, developers regularly blend the elements of several genres. A perfect example is *Die-Hard Trilogy*, which mixes both driving and shooting. Because it combines these elements, we categorize it as an Action game, instead of using an awkward hybrid definition like "driving shooter." In other situations, "Action" is used because there's simply no other way to accurately describe a game. Take the early classic *Joust*, in which players ride ostriches and play "chicken" with other ostriches and their riders. There's no shooting in this game, or any other classifiable activity. In this sense, "Action" is used as a default classification.

Adventure

In an adventure, you progress through a game, exploring places and gathering items and information that help you ultimately complete some kind of goal or quest. Examples of games from this category include *Tecmo's Deception* and *Silverload*. (See also **RPG**.)

Action/Adventure

There are occasions when we'll combine one or more genres to offer a more refined description of a game. The most common use is the Action/Adventure genre. Take, for example, a game like *Resident Evil*, in which your character explores a mansion and also encounters zombies that must be eliminated. *Resident Evil*, therefore, incorporates Action-oriented shooting with the search-and-find aspects of an Adventure game.

Arcade

You'll find this icon representing games that translate arcade favorites. PlayStation games like Namco's *Museum* collections and *Tekken 2* fall into this category. Pinball conversions also fall into this genre.

Commercial Break

It's no secret that gaming is big business, so much so that millions of dollars are spent each year to advertise games and related products. When you see our Commercial Break icon, we're analyzing a print ad or broadcast commercial.

Fighting

A one-on-one fighting contest. Games like *Tekken*, *Toshinden*, *Perfect Weapon* (and even wrestling games) are covered by this category. No boxing games are currently available on the PlayStation, but if and when they arrive we'll classify them as Fighting games.

Full Motion Video

When you see this icon near a sequence of pictures, it means *station* is profiling a game's video sequence. One of the PlayStation's true strengths is its ability to incorporate full-motion video clips into games; these scenes add loads of vitality to games and really enhance their ability to introduce a game's storyline. You won't find FMV clips in cartridge-based games, because they don't have enough storage capacity.

Puzzle

This refers to any title in which the gameplay centers around solving a basic puzzle. There are an infinite number of variations on the puzzle theme, from simple games like *Tetris* that usually take place on a single playing field to elaborate games like *Myst* (or the epic *D*), which riddle you with brain-teasers while you venture through complex environments.

RPG

RPGs (Role Playing Games) begin by introducing the player to a character that he or she controls throughout the campaign. Some players may consider RPGs Adventures, and they are. However, they differ from Adventure games because they use a standardized hit-point system and a different overall presentation. RPGs are like soap operas, more comparable to the TV mini-series than the short hour-long adventure. Examples: *Beyond the Beyond*, *Final Fantasy VII*.

Shooter

Born in the arcades with such classics as *Defender* and *Galaga* (both available for the PlayStation), Shooters let gamers unload clip after clip on unspecting alien or enemy ship. In a true Shooter, the only activity the player will engage in is shooting.

Side-scrolling

A game in which the main character progresses from left to right, collecting power-ups and other items that help the player achieve the game's objectives.

Sports

Each sports game is influenced by the sport it's fashioned after. New games create special genres in the category by taking aspects of existing sports games and adding futuristic twists on them. Examples of these games would be *League of Pain*, *Pitball* and *Blast Chamber*.

Strategy

Games like *X-Com UFO Defense* and *WORMS* pit the player against the computer or a human opponent. Your job is to out-think your adversary.

reviews

Publisher/Developer Info...This is where you'll discover the parties responsible for a game.

Info Strip...Here, at a convenient glance, is where you'll discover key info (like a game's genre, any special compatibilities, and how many players the game can accommodate).

Tower of Power Award...Not every PlayStation title can win one of these babies. In fact, only games receiving an overall rating of 9.0 or more are stamped with our special "seal of approval."

Fast Forward...If you don't have time to read an entire review, check the Fast Forward summary for a quick re-cap.

FMV...One of the PlayStation's greatest strengths is its ability to run full-motion video. We give you a taste of a game's cinematic strength by showing you a representative FMV sequence.

Ratings...station's ratings are broken out individually, so you can see just how a game fares in each of our six review criteria categories.

Box Art ..In case you want to purchase a game we review, we show you exactly what that game package will look like in stores.

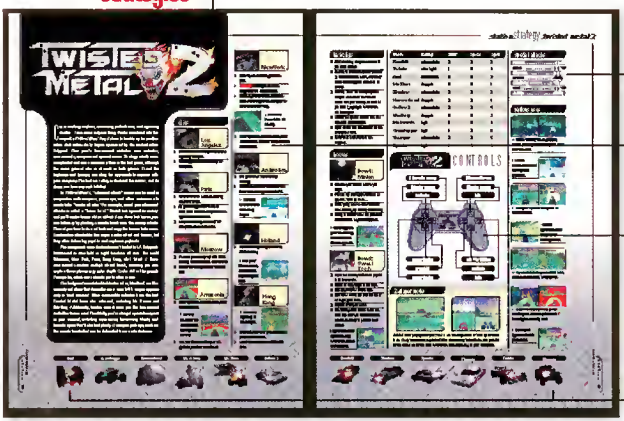
previews

Info Strip...Essential game information (including expected release date), presented through easily identifiable icons.

Web Site...Want to explore *station* on-line? You'll find our web address handily listed at this location on each page.

Options...If an upcoming game contains special features or options, we'll lay all that out for you. (In our preview of *Rally Cross*, for example, we show you the entire fleet of vehicles at your disposal.)

strategies



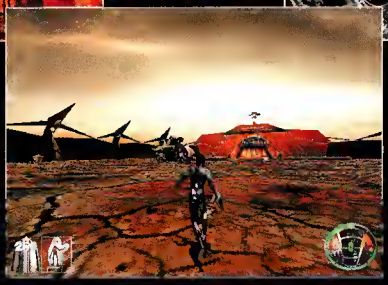
Game Overview...This overview brings you up to speed about a game's storyline and the basic activities players perform.

Code Sequences...Our code sequences are easy to grasp, because we show (not tell) which buttons to press.

Cities...Level-by-level descriptions and summaries, all designed to give you the right amount of game guidance (without ruining cool surprises).

Controller Review...Different games assign different functions to the Controller Pad buttons. Our Controller Review eliminates any confusion.

Game Elements...We showcase different features and game elements in our strategies (like these vehicles from *Twisted Metal 2*).

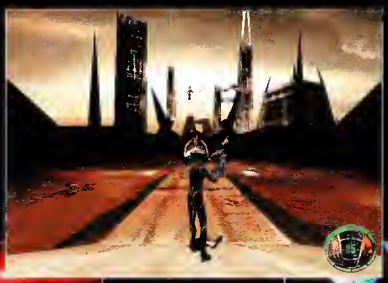


"MDK promises 3-D technology so cool and action so...realistic that it will send everything else running for cover."
– PC GAMER

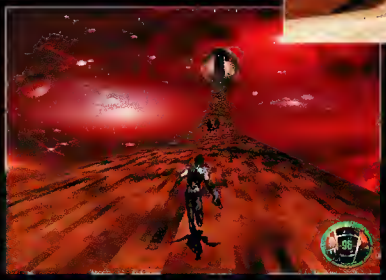
"The ability to zoom in from a mile away within the sniper mode is remarkable."
– ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

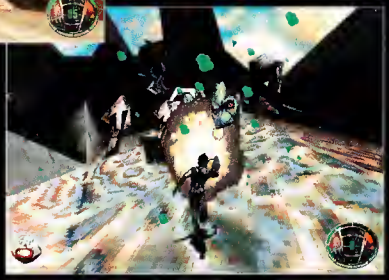
THE WORLD WILL END IN 1999. THE

"One of the most innovative games ever created."
– GAMEFAN



"...we could be looking at a 1997 Playstation game of the year..."
– GAMEFAN





RATING PENDING
RP
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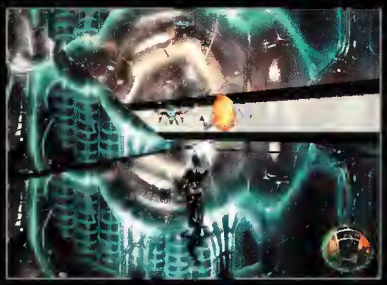
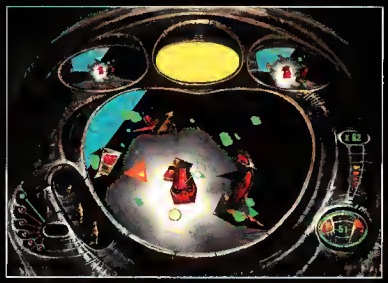




Your planet is being bulldozed by the ton. Alien controlled mobile mining cities are strip-mining the earth's surface overrunning and crushing anything in their path...Unless you can stop them.

BATTLE TO SAVE IT WILL BEGIN SOON.

- Fully 3-D rendered graphics unlike anything you have ever before seen.
- Over 60 arenas spread out over 6 cities.
- Never before seen "sniper mode" that allows you to zoom in on the enemy and pick it off with astounding accuracy.
- The most sophisticated enemy artificial intelligence ever created. Fully reactive "smart enemies" think, listen, and communicate in a calculated assault on your life.
- An arsenal of totally innovative weapons and equipment including:
  - A helmet-mounted sniper rifle that targets enemies from over two miles away.
  - A living polymer suit that protects from piercing projectiles.
  - A high-tech reusable parachute.
  - Bombs... decoys... homing sniper grenades... and many more.
- Two styles of adrenaline-pumping game dynamics featuring first and third person point of view.

IT THINKS. THEREFORE IT KILLS.

http://www.playmatestoys.com

www.shiny.com

The PlayStation Profile

Born of a failed 1988 marriage between Sony and Nintendo (Sony was slated to develop a CD attachment for the Super Nintendo, until Nintendo balked at partnership), the Sony PlayStation lived a sheltered existence in a company research lab, until the game console was finally unveiled to the public on December 3, 1994 (in Japan).

The system was (and still is) the pinnacle of home entertainment technology. Not only had Sony built a better mouse trap, but they had done so at a time when other video game giants were still trying to break through the invisible 2D barrier. Basically, Sony foresaw the 3D gaming trend and seized upon a truly golden opportunity. The results: technology that would forever shatter the boundaries that had held gaming back. .

With only one game (Ridge Racer), the Sony PlayStation quickly became the machine of choice for gamers everywhere. Its powerful graphics processors and sleek, stylish design also captured the fancy of game developers too, who flocked to the system in droves. Now with almost 200 games available in almost every conceivable category, the PlayStation offers a more diverse game library than any other game console on the market.

Developed with a meager budget of $500 million, the Sony PlayStation represents a revolutionary leap forward in home entertainment. The CD-based system offers game experiences players could only dream of before, but what makes the system do all its wonderful tricks, and why you should care about all this.

Get ready, because station is about to climb inside the Sony game box and give you the big picture...

the Specs

CPU:

- 32-bit custom R3000A RISC chip operating @33MHz
- 30 MIPS
- Bus bandwidth 132 MB per second

Memory:

- 16Mbits Main RAM
- 8 Mbits VRAM
- 4 Mbits Sound RAM
- 256K CD-ROM buffer RAM
- 4 Mbits OS ROM
- 128K removable Memory Card for saving games

Graphics:

- 300,000 polygons per second
- 66 MIPS Geometry Transfer Engine
- 24-bit true color, image resolution @ 256x224 to 640x480
- Up to 4000 8x8 pixel sprites
- Complete sprite scaling routines
- Full range of Alpha channel effects
- Propriety MDEC FMV system

Sound:

- 16-bit sound chip
- ADCPM with 24 sound channels
- 4.1 KHz sampling frequency

the box that rocks

At the heart of the Sony PlayStation is a custom R3000A RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Chip) operating at 33 MHz (megahertz). It completes a staggering 30 millions of instructions per second—a pretty standard CPU clock speed, but this RISC works in conjunction with other custom processors. That's where the PlayStation gets its punch.

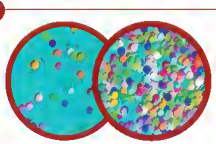
Also onboard the main CPU is a Geometry Transfer Engine (or GTE), and this little baby is backed up by a Graphics Processing Unit (or GPU). These two technological marvels handle all the graphical data, which is then loaded into the VRAM (Video Random Access Memory). The VRAM in turn stores the information in a frame buffer until it's needed to be displayed on-screen. Special effects such as light-source shading, transparent effects (like smoke or fog) and other bits of eye-candy are also added. Finally, when all these elements are combined with the 16.8 million colors that fill the PlayStation palette, you've got the materials necessary to create awesome ultra-realistic gameplay.

Special Effects

These demos (made available to anyone who pre-ordered a Sony PlayStation and of course, developers) show off the full range of special effects that can easily be created with the PlayStation's able graphics processors.

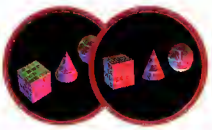
Balls

With the PlayStation's graphic capabilities, it can easily handle thousands of onscreen objects at any time.



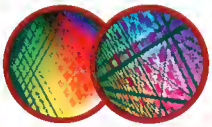
Oden

Objects can be easily light-sourced and textured (and scaled!) with the PlayStation's amazing graphics processors. Here, basic objects are shaded and texture-mapped in this developer's demo.



Diffusion Cube

Use this diffusion to scale (and rotate) several onscreen objects at once.



Movie

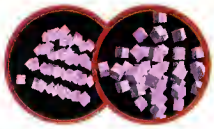
Using a proprietary MDEC Full Motion Video System (FMV) the PlayStation's CD-based system can show incredibly detailed movies, as good or better than your VCR. Other systems only wish they were as talented.

Mat

A rotating mat demonstrates the PlayStation's ability to rotate objects in real-time. Here a sprite-based "flipping frog" that hops randomly around the rotating mat.

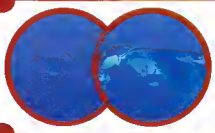
rCube/transparent

Another demo shows off the PlayStation's scaling and rotation techniques. This same demo demonstrates the transparency effect.



Manta

With auto sprite-scaling, the machine easily zooms in and out on objects. This manta ray (and school of fish) are well rendered.



Dinopic

The PlayStation has true 24-bit color, and some 16.8 million of them at that. This nearly infinite spectrum allows the machine to portray almost any subject matter with unbelievably unforced realism.

Seven Easy Pieces

The following seven attachments will let you operate your PlayStation, and help you get more enjoyment out of your system.

Controller Pad

PlayStation Controller Pads sell for around $30 each, but since your original system comes with two pads, you probably won't need another. Designed so special moves can be controlled individually, the PlayStation Controller Pad is packed with buttons (14 in all).

Mouse

Some games, especially those mixing strategy and puzzle-solving, are easier to play using a standard Mouse, which connects to the serial port on the back of the PlayStation. The PlayStation Mouse (about $35) is ergonomically designed to improve your playing performance.

Analog Joystick

Used in its standard analog mode, the Analog Joystick (about $70) enhances cockpit-based games. Switch to digital mode, and you're ready for arcade play with supercharged thrills.

RFU Adapter

If you're using an older TV (one built before the "ready-for-cable" era began), your set may not be equipped to receive input from the PlayStation. The RFU Adapter (about $30) corrects this problem.

Multi Tap

The Multi Tap (around $50) expands on the functions performed by the Link Cable. One adapter lets four competitors go at it. For a double dose of fun, hook up two multi taps so eight players can participate.

Link Cable

A Link Cable enables head-to-head gaming by hooking up two PlayStation units to each other. One Link Cable comes with the PlayStation as standard equipment, and attaches via the serial port on the back of the console.

Memory Cards

If your games take more than a single sitting to play, you can save and update your progress on Memory Cards that load into the front of the PlayStation. Each card sells for around $25 and carries 128 kb of memory.

reviews

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You were a research scientist—now you're a cybernetic spider, battling it out with other biomechanical insects. See how the creepy, crawly *Spider* fares in our review (page 20).

Producing hovering terror on any terrain, Jet Moto rockets you across water, sand, and ice. To find out what *Jet Moto* has that other racing games don't, turn to page 26.

COOL BOARDERS

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

Publisher

GENRE: RACING
COMPATIBILITY: MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER

They'll Be Comin' Down the Mountain...

Grab your board and hit the powder! *Cool Boarders* has arrived, pitting you against extreme slopes and an ever-ticking clock.

Your goal is accumulating stunt points as you take the quick route down various courses. The game supplies you with a variety of super-slick boards, but you'll need a steady combination of speed and skill to master this one-player simulation.

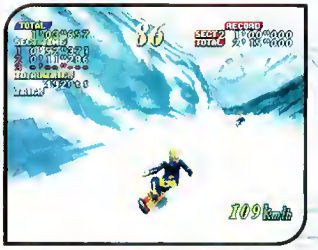
In order to master each course, you must score the fastest time and accumulate the highest amount of trick points (points are awarded for a variety of stunts). The boards you choose from are each rated for speed, stability, and control. After conquering a course, you receive a better board, helpful for attempting your next slope.

Graphically, *Cool Boarders* is a knock-out. The alpine environment is expertly re-created and we never detected any course redraw. Character animation is superb as well, with silky-smooth movement and an available first-person viewpoint that's almost too thrilling. Another option that really enhances the game is the "Ghost Data," mode which allows you to replay a previous run while you're racing—in effect, you race against your "ghost" image and former time.

The game's only drawback is its audio. There's little variety in the background music and the voice narration is downright annoying (you may change courses but the narration stays the same, regardless of where you're boarding). The sound effects are only slightly better, but do contribute to the realism of the game.

Cool Boarder's replay value is definitely upped by its overall difficulty and the intensity of the snowboarding experience. Each course is radically different from the one before it, and there's no guarantee that beating a course means you can do it again.

If you can't make the pilgrimage to nearby slopes, *Cool Boarders* does a fantastic job of conveying snowboarding's awesome rush. For added realism, you might try wearing ski-goggles and sitting in front of an air conditioner when playing. (What's more important—what your neighbors think of you, or achieving total snowboarding nirvana?)

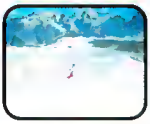


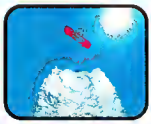
Cool Boarders' player animations and dynamic backgrounds help convey the snowboarding experience magnificently.

Cool Boarders sends you into many tight spots. Here you must shoot the gap.

Before taking your life into your hands, take a look at the course diagram first.

The FMV intro gives you a taste of the thrills to come. A lone rider approaches the edge of a cliff, spraying snow in his wake. Does he stop at the edge of the cliff? Heck, no...this is *Cool Boarders!*





FAST FORWARD A graphics bonanza, *Cool Boarders* sends you rocketing down extreme mountain courses. You have an ample selection of boards, and the gameplay is hot enough to melt ice. Still, it's the phenomenal mountain backgrounds that blow you away, and make *Cool Boarders* a definite winner.

station 7.6

GRAPHICS	8.5	GAMEPLAY	9
SOUND	6	PRESENTATION	8
LIFESPAN	8	ORIGINALITY	7

SIGNAL STRENGTH

GENRE

COMPATIBILITY

PLAYERS

The (New) First Name in 1st-Person Shooters

Psygnosis has been on a hot streak lately. Now the publisher turns its attention to the first-person shooter genre.

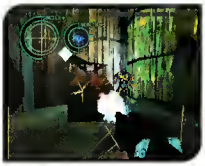
Codename: Tenka, Psygnosis's first offering in this category, is sure to win legions of *Doom* fans and deserves every new recruit it gets.

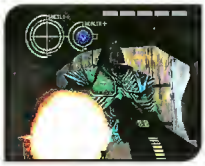
Obvious care was put into *Tenka*, often improving upon the wildly successful *Doom*. For instance, when your Tenka character ambles forward, he sways to and fro slightly, just as he would were he really human. This isn't weird—it's simply realistic. (*Doom* also recreated walking motions in a natural manner, although *Tenka* does it a little bit better.) By the same token, the shotgun you fired in *Doom* kicked appropriately, but the futuristic gun you shoot in *Tenka* recoils more smoothly and even spits out its empty shells with a perfectly machine-like motion.

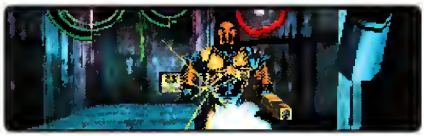
The shotgun in Doom *kicked appropriately, but the futuristic blaster in* Tenka *recoils more smoothly and even spits out its empty shells.*

An even more dramatic addition is the laser sight mounted on your gun. This hasn't been seen before in any console-based shooters having a first-person perspective. Cooler still: the sight works accurately. When you aim at targets off in the distance, a single red laser dot pinpoints the sighted area, but when you aim the sight at a nearby object, we see a triangle of red dots projected onto the site—the way an actual laser sight operates. *Tenka* scores serious points for such realism-enhancing details.

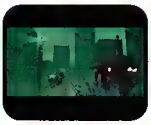
In many ways, *Tenka* out-*Dooms Doom*. The new game's graphics are noticeably smoother and the different room surfaces hold together without annoying pixelation, even when you zoom in closely on them. *Tenka* has plenty of variety and plays as smoothly as a Swiss watch runs. Fans of this genre should rejoice—the new leader among first-person shooting games has arrived...and its codename is *Tenka*.

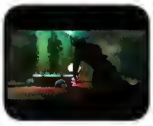

Most of the game is spent searching for spinning power cores. Once destroyed, find the EVAC sign to leave each level.


You'll encounter up to 17 different (texture-mapped) enemies as you progress through the 20 levels that comprise *Tenka*'s 9 locations.


For impressive cinematic carnage, try *Tenka*'s widescreen mode.

As Tenka, you arrive on an off-world colony, expecting paradise but finding a war zone. Before peace can return, you must destroy a manufacturing plant mass-producing a force of deadly warriors.





FAST FORWARD *Tenka* takes the proven first-person shooting genre and enhances it with elements of strategy. The game's true beauty, however, lies in superior graphics and realistic touches. So smooth it supplies the genre with fresh blood (literally), *Tenka* is the heir apparent to the first-person shooter throne.

station

GRAPHICS	9	GAMEPLAY	8
SOUND	8	PRESENTATION	9
LIFESPAN	9	ORIGINALITY	6

SIGNAL STRENGTH 9.5

HEXEN

GENRE: ACTION/ADVENTURE
COMPATIBILITY: MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 TO 4

Publisher: GT Interactive Software

Doom-ed Right From the Start...

Diehard *Doom* fans are frequently looking for any new shooter that will grant them a break from their usual game-of-choice.

There's big demand for shooters these days, so it's easy to understand why this game was made (for PC). What's hard to fathom is why *Hexen* is such a let-down, considering both titles come from the same developer, ID Software.

***Hexen*'s brawling isn't exciting, but it is brutal. If you're into blood, swing away.**

Essentially a shooter without guns, *Hexen* employs the basic plot of defying tough odds by battling evil presences, this time from the dark forces of D'Sparil. Hexen's world is being ravaged by inter-dimensional travelers bent on destroying everything in their paths. You portray one of the three humans who weren't mown down by D'Sparil's Serpent Riders. You assume the role of a warrior, magician, or priest, each of whom has his own particular strengths and weaknesses.

Hexen is centered around too many slow battles and contains too much down-time between fights.

Hexen follows the same first-person shooting style that *Doom* pioneered, where you travel through a large structure (in this case, a castle-like building), finding enemies and surprises as you move through the various rooms. Unfortunately, that's where the similarities end between the two games.

Maybe the problem is speed. *Doom* sucked gamers into its carnage, in part, because it didn't give you a chance to catch your breath; by the time you'd finished "cleaning" one room, you were already en route to another battle. On the other hand, *Hexen* is centered around too many slow battles and contains too much down-time between fights.

Hexen's premise doesn't encourage quick gameplay, either. Rooted in the usual trappings of medieval sword-and-sorcery games, *Hexen*'s combat is limited to hand-to-hand fighting, using primitive weapons, and conjuring magic. These activities are slower than *Doom*'s constant running-and-gunning, and Hexen never kicks into high gear. The game's total lack of flash and firepower creates a dullness that only gets worse as you continue through the game. Not even the occasional earthquake, rolling fog, or sinking floor breaks up the tedium.

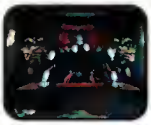
Doom benefited from its transformation to the PlayStation console, receiving crystal-clear graphics, a bigger sound, and seamless game play. *Hexen*, however, seems scared to take advantage of the PlayStation's processing power. The enemies you fight aren't well-drawn, and the game's environments aren't much better. Unfortunately, *Hexen* looks like it's peopled with 8-bit characters set against 16-bit backgrounds.

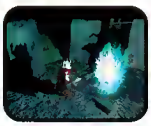
Mystic passageways transport you to new arenas.

Unless you want a medieval variation on *Doom* without any bells and whistles, or an exciting pace—then *Hexen* is worth a look. Otherwise, stick to shooters in which you actually get to fire.

SCENE 1 TAKE 1 FULL-MOTION VIDEO

There's nothing friendly about the forces who would cast earth's last three humans into darkness. Their magic is powerful and frightening. You're all that's left—and your survival is a mixed blessing.





PlayStation

FAST FORWARD

If you want a whole lot of sluggin' with the usual sword-and-sorcery cliches—magic spells, dark landscapes, and buckets of blood—then *Hexen*'s for you. Despite its *Doom* heritage and first-person shooting style, the visuals disappoint and the action drags.

station

GRAPHICS	4	GAMEPLAY	5
SOUND	4	PRESENTATION	4
LIFESPAN	6	ORIGINALITY	3

SIGNAL STRENGTH

4.5

GENRE: ADVENTURE
COMPATIBILITY: MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER

the city of lost children

Publisher: PSYGNOSIS

Lost Children and a Lost Opportunity

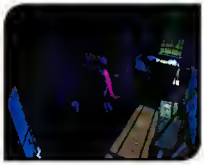
Some novels are so wildly imaginative that Hollywood never even tries to bring their stories to the Silver Screen.

The film industry has a word for such novels: Unfilmable. Perhaps the game industry should come up with their own term for great movies that don't translate well into games. One such film would be *City of Lost Children*, which Psygnosis should have left in its native France and never tried to bring to the PlayStation.

Maybe we're being a bit harsh. It's not that *City of Lost Children* is an unattractive game. The PlayStation translation of this stunning film boasts graphics that will leave your jaw hanging. The level of visual detail is as rich as the game's sound quality, and that's saying a lot. It's no surprise why *City of Lost Children* is such a banquet for the senses—after all, one of the film's directors (Marc Caro) supervised the game's artistic direction in Psygnosis's Paris development studio. The real-time shadows look as close to real as you're likely to find in a computer game; the motion-captured characters move in natural, flowing movements.

The only problem is that there's a game to play here...if you can find it.

You are Miette, the waifish young girl who aids One, a brawny circus strongman, as he tries to rescue his abducted little brother, Denree. The little boy's kidnapper (the evil scientist Krank) is conducting horrendous experiments on children in an effort to actually steal their dreams. As the rescue effort continues, you locate hidden objects, skulk about the dark city, and solve puzzles.



Miette must search these darkened scenarios for the objects she needs. Look for a light before proceeding.

To get the pliers, wait until the mechanic's head is lowered, then take them.

Keys are typically well-hidden. Check beyond the obvious hiding places.

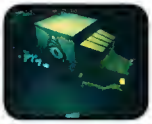
Part of the problem with this game is the murky, stylized landscapes Miette traverses. With only two possible camera angles (you can only access them at certain points, and there's no guarantee that they'll aid you at all), finding the needed item can prove daunting. (You'll probably want to turn off the audio once Miette's "I can't manage it" starts wearing thin.) Fortunately, you do receive visual cues when you're close enough to retrieve an object you're after, but getting there is no easy job.

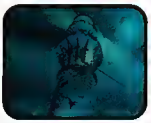
The sluggish controls don't help matters. Miette's movements are natural, to be sure, but they're limited; getting her to move in the direction you want is not easy. It's also difficult to position Miette exactly where she needs to be in order to find necessary items.

Most of these problems could be forgiven, if the game were interesting. Unfortunately, playing *City of Lost Children* is apt to turn you into the "Gamer of Lost Interest."

SCENE 1 TAKE 1 FULL-MOTION VIDEO

The Cyclops truck represents the threat of child abduction. Then, Miette shorts out the lighthouse beam to divert the watchman's attention. Finally, the brutal One knocks out the watchman.





FAST FORWARD A gorgeous game whose graphics and audio positively sing on the PlayStation, *City of Lost Children* falls flat in terms of gameplay. If you're looking for mind-blowing entertainment, see the original source film...but not this PlayStation adaptation.

GRAPHICS	10	GAMEPLAY	3
SOUND	9	PRESENTATION	8
LIFESPAN	5	ORIGINALITY	7

SIGNAL STRENGTH

5.9

Proof That Demons Do Exist

In the near future, mankind has conquered dimensional travel but the door we have opened swings both ways. The peaceful city you have grown up in has become a haven for dark creatures from another world— Demons! Now it's up to you and your friends to harness the hidden power within you by entering the fantasy game known as Persona.

You awaken with incredible abilities that you will need to defeat the scores of Demon invaders and cleanse the land of their forces. Converse with them before doing battle to determine your best course of action. Fight them or enlist their aid in your mission. Either way, you are set for the fantasy adventure of a lifetime!

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- 100+ hours of pulse pounding gameplay
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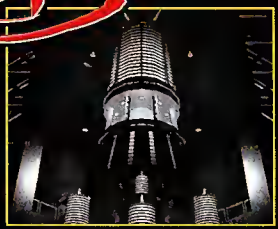
Use your "Persona"



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Persona™ is the first chapter of the REVELATIONS™ SERIES

RPG

PlayStation™

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Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating Information.

GENRE: ACTION
COMPATIBILITY: MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER

TIGERSHARK

Publisher: GT Interactive Software

A Sub Mission Worth Submitting To

Sub warfare games don't get more intense than this one, which sends you into naval combat both above and beneath the waves.

As *Tigershark* begins, you're commanding a combination submarine/hydrofoil prototype that's busily mapping the ocean floor in an American project to construct undersea bases.

Meanwhile, Japan's booming population has caused its power needs to mushroom. Their solution? Set energy-producing Geothermal Taps along undersea jault lines. The taps work fine until earthquakes strike, submerging most of the islands. At this point, a mad Russian admiral seizes control of the weakened Japan (in fact, he's responsible for their earthquakes). It's bad enough that the admiral is siphoning off Japanese energy, but what's worse is that the situation is brewing geological instability on the ocean floor, causing value-sized earthquakes and hurricanes.

Luckily, you're not responsible for understanding the game's complicated storyline. The only thing you really have to worry about is steering your craft (it resembles the Bat Plane) and firing at enemy ships sponsored by the mad admiral. Steering isn't one bit difficult, thanks to the Waypoint Indicator, which sits on the edge of the sonar dial at the bottom left corner of the screen.

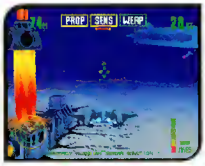
There are three different camera angles, although the first-person view is most useful. However, the third-person view is better-suited for certain missions, such as when you accompany the Yazoo sub to different taps. A third view is piped in from a drop camera placed at the rear of your vessel, although this perspective is mainly used for achieving a broad overview of the combat area.

Your Tigershark sub is stocked with a Gatling Assault Cannon (which never runs out of ammo), Phased Plasma Repeaters, and a variety of rockets and torpedoes. And you'll be thankful you're toting explosives when you rumble with stealthy opponents like the super-quick Konkurs Tactical Fighter and the Mirka Subfighter, with its wide-range firing capability.

Tigershark isn't the sharpest looking game you'll ever play, but it's crammed with variety, and its arcade-based nature makes it a lot of fun.

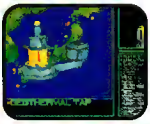
Shoot the mines surrounding the Yushio to release it. Then escort it to the taps.

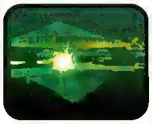
Above the water's surface, you can destroy Russian carriers and cruisers.

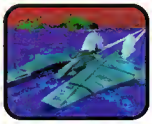


Follow your indicator to this Geothermal Tap, then blast it to smithereens.

As commander of the Tigershark, your main duties are reprogramming the Japanese Geothermal Taps and destroying the Russian Taps... and not getting annihilated in the process.







FAST FORWARD A throwback to great arcade-based sub games. *Tigershark* puts the emphasis on *fun*. The action (above and beneath the waves) is riveting and your super-agile sub is perfectly capable of combatting undersea terrorism and correcting geothermal faults.

station

GRAPHICS	8	GAMEPLAY	8
SOUND	6	PRESENTATION	8
LIFESPAN	7	ORIGINALITY	9

SIGNAL STRENGTH: 7.5

- Eight real athletes, each with their own fighting style
- Stunning 3-D and 2-D arenas
- Four fighting modes: One Player, VS, Tournament, and Team Battle
- Sanctioned by K-1, the official international tournament fighting organization

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GENRE: SIDE SCROLLING
COMPATIBILITY: MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER

SPIDER

BMG INTERACTIVE Publisher

The Six Million Dollar Spider?

A word of caution: If you suffer from arachnaphobia, you might want to avoid Boss Game Studios' latest creation.

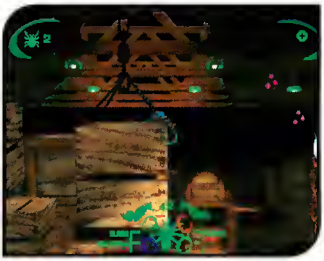
Why? Because as the main character in *Spider* you move, feel, and look exactly like an arachnid—and we're not talking about just any old measly wolf spider. In this game, you're a death-dealing tarantula with two-inch fangs.

You didn't always travel around on eight legs, though. Once you were a brilliant scientist experimenting with various artificial life forms. The profit-crazy Microtech organization, realizing the importance of your work, sent kidnappers to abduct you...and you were mortally wounded trying to escape your captors. Before seeing that final, beckoning light, you (because you're such an incredibly smart scientist) were able to transfer your consciousness into the body of a cybernetic spider.

The good news is that your built-in flame throwers and missiles can protect you while you navigate the lab. The bad news is that you're not the only bug packing heat.

Look for the scattered CD-ROM piece in each level. Jump here to get this one.

As the story continues, the kidnappers/murderers steal your human body and drag it to their own lair. You witness all this commotion through spider eyes, making it your mission to follow your assailants and take whatever steps necessary to reuniting yourself with your own original skin. With six 3D-rendered environments (broken down into 30 individual levels), you've got plenty of exploring to do on your cybernetic limbs. Your progress through the 30 total levels is continuously checked by a floating camera that tracks the cybernetic spider.

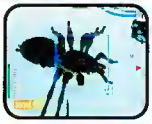


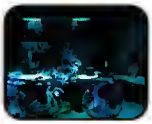
Before jumping to a new ledge, destroy all the insects that occupy it. You don't need any welcoming committees.

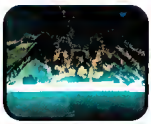
"Cybernetic" means you're no ordinary insect. Although your natural spider movements (like walking across ceilings) are pretty nifty, your laboratory breeding and special technology enable you to do things normal spiders can't...like firing homing missiles and letting loose with a flame thrower. The good news is that your built-in weaponry can protect you while you navigate the lab and surrounding streets and sewers, searching for a way to escape your sorry fate.

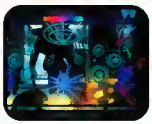
The bad news is that you're not the only bug packing heat. The lab ▶

You're a scientist developing artificial life forms. An evil outfit wants a piece of your scientific action and kills you during a kidnapping attempt. Before fading away for keeps, you manage to transfer your consciousness to a cybernetic spider.

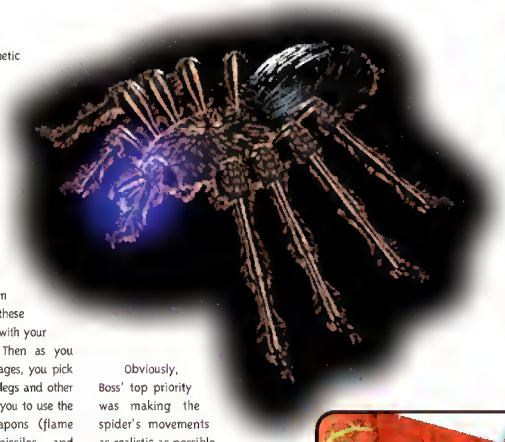






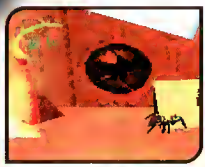


spawned other cybernetic experiments, and now you've got a terrifying chance to study them up close. Along the way, you tangle with wasps that have machine-guns in their tails and scorpions equipped with laser beams, just to name a couple of the dangerous super-insects you meet. Early in the game, you kill these biomechanical enemies with your poison-oozing fangs. Then as you progress through the stages, you pick up the powerful bionic legs and other body parts that enable you to use the powerful add-on weapons (flame throwers, homing missiles, and seeking mines).

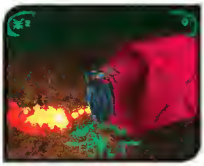


Obviously, Boss' top priority was making the spider's movements as realistic as possible. In fact, the developers reportedly purchased huge tarantulas and observed them for days on end to capture each and every one of their creepy movements. The realism was strengthened by the use of proprietary motion capture technology and fully-textured images. For the average gamer, *Spider* is easy to control, although when you climb underneath ledges, the spider is out of view; this will require some getting used to.

Lava lamps and strobing lights? No mystery about it—you've crawled into the 70's room!



In order to walk across the red fire you must have a shield. Drop on this sphere and the shield will be yours.



Inside this gasoline can is a one-up icon. Enter the can when the flame dissipates.

As menacing as this mechanical arm boss looks, it's easy to defeat. Strike when it hits the ground and jump when it tosses fireballs.

Boss Studios (the game developer's parent company) is best-known for designing special effects for movies like *Star Wars*, *Batman Returns*, and *True Lies*, and this cinematic background shows. Perhaps even more impressive than *Spider*'s visuals, however, is its gameplay. Although we've never crawled around like insects ourselves, we can't imagine anyone capturing the eight-legged experience better than this *Spider* does.

armed for battle

Your spider can be equipped with a number of interchangeable limbs. Find the one best suited for your opponent and blast away!

PlayStation
SPIDER

FAST FORWARD Do you want better graphics or gameplay? Boss Game Studios is betting on gameplay, and it shows in Spider. The graphics aren't bad, but it's the exactly recreated sensation of crawling around like an arachnid that makes Spider worth checking out.

station

GRAPHICS	6	GAMEPLAY	9
SOUND	5	PRESENTATION	7
LIFESPAN	8	ORIGINALITY	8

SIGNAL STRENGTH

8.0

GENRE

PLAYERS

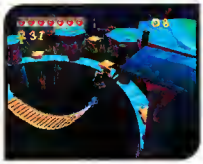
Pandemonium!

Publisher

2D Side-Scrollers Make a 3D Leap Forward

Once upon a time, the typical side-scroller looked *crummy*. The boxy characters were always stuck in blocky backgrounds.

In those old 8-bit days, you really had to use your imagination to become immersed in the game experience—but no more, thanks to PlayStation power and graphical groundbreakers like *Pandemonium!*

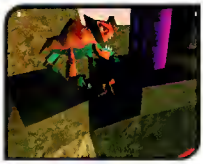


The game's freestyle camera shows you the action from dramatic perspectives.

The game's story puts a comic twist on the usual "wizards 'n' spells" plotline. You portray one of two main characters, either a blonde, Joan-of-Arc type, or a sarcastic jester wearing high-top sneakers. (The characters deliver over 300 one-liners, their voices supplied by two comics from the cable-and-comedy club circuit.) The characters find trouble by cooking up dangerous magic. They discover an off-limits book of spells at a "wizards-in-training" seminar... and, of course, they can't resist. Before you can say "Alacazam," the pair has been whisked into an off-kilter land decorated with genuinely gorgeous backgrounds. Your run-and-jump travels lead you through 18+ levels of bridges, pathways, and towers, as you search for the exits out of this enchanted kingdom.

Whichever identity you assume, you'll enjoy *Pandemonium!'s* "Freestyle 3D Camera Technology," which periodically changes perspective. This is used to maximize dramatic effect, like when it illustrates the scary view you'd actually see if you were perched atop a terrifyingly high bridge. This feature works well, even though you don't control the camera's changing movements—because the views the game chooses to show you are the ones you'd probably select anyway. This isn't a 3D exploration, where you need camera control; *Pandemonium!* is a side-scroller, which means you've already got a full slate of activities, i.e. retrieving power-ups and extra lives. Progress is saved via passwords.

Pandemonium!'s Freestyle 3-D Camera maximizes dramatic effect and works well—even though you don't control the camera's movements.

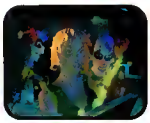


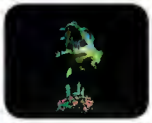
The bosses in *Pandemonium!* aren't as rewarding as the rest of the game.

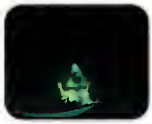
The game's only serious problem is the way it burns up most of its challenge early on. The first few levels seriously test your skills, but then it's as if the learning curve flatlines. *Pandemonium!* would be stronger if it saved some of its difficulty for later levels (perhaps the later bosses should have been more menacing and less cuddly). That would have ensured the game remained interesting, even after players had mastered the techniques of a particular level.

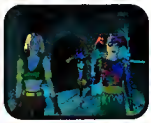
But no matter. *Pandemonium!* makes the grade because its graphics are often dazzling, its Freestyle 3D camera is maneuvered nearly perfectly, and because its overall presentation is first-rate. All side-scroller developers should do their homework so well.

Fargus and Nikki open a portal to *Pandemonium!* after finding a Wizard's spellbook. They accidentally unleash a city-munching monster and a whole lot of trouble!









FAST FORWARD With breathtaking visuals and stomach churning camera angles *Pandemonium!* takes the traditional 2D side-scrolling platform game and turns it into a total 3D excursion. Beautifully rendered characters and the tried and true side-scrolling style combine to make this a great game.

station

GRAPHICS	9	GAMEPLAY	7
SOUND	8	PRESENTATION	8
LIFESPAN	7	ORIGINALITY	5

8.5

Suikoden 幻想水滸伝

GENRE: RPG
COMPATIBILITY: MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER

Publisher: KONAMI

The Reigning King of RPG Hill

Pity the poor RPG fan—not only has their favorite genre been largely ignored by PlayStation developers, but the few games that have appeared for this genre haven't come close to hitting the mark. That's what makes *Suikoden* such a pleasant surprise. Now there's an RPG featuring intense fighting, strong characters, stirring battle sequences, music that appropriately underscores the action, and a solid story that continually evolves.

Don't expect your first glance at *Suikoden* to impress you, however. Its phoned-in plot (you organize a rebel army to counter the evil empire now controlling your homeland), hand-drawn sprites, choppy landscapes, lifeless backgrounds, and turn-based fighting system don't seem to raise the game above the usual RPG trappings. You might initially think you're seeing a sequel to *Beyond the Beyond* (as if we needed one).

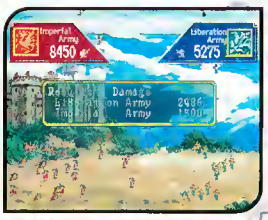
Valeria's Falcon Rune magic makes quite an impression on an enemy soldier.

Corrupt and vile, the soldiers of the Empire are not to be trusted.

The game's small-scale skirmishes won't draw any gasps of amazement, either, although they're acceptable. The action unfolds from a three-quarter view, with occasional zooms to enliven things, and while the magic spells and ability to team characters in deadly fighting tandems add spice, they don't sustain enough flavor over the course of the game.

On the other hand, if you base your enjoyment of an RPG experience on smart dialogue, intriguing characters, and thoughtful plot development, then *Suikoden* will reward you in spades. While there are plenty of conversations among the game's 108 characters, most are well-written and absolutely vital to pushing the plot. These one-on-one encounters earn and keep your interest as you work through the various subplots.

Where the game really shines, though, is in its terrific strategy sequences, where your rag-tag Liberation Army takes on superior Empire forces. Sure, these are turn-based battles, and the sprites are even blockier than before, but the fighting is frenetic, and the departure of slain souls to the heavens is visually impressive (even for a game as graphically uninspired as this one). RPG fans are going to be knocked out by these epic battle scenes, which haven't been seen before in games of this genre.



In the pitched battles between the Liberation Army and the Empire's forces, you immediately see how well your strategies work out.

When Kai and your character join forces for a Master-Student attack, the results are usually devastating.

Suikoden had the earth trembling before ever arriving at U.S. shores and stores. A monster hit in its native Japan, the American arrival of Konami's *Suikoden* is a worthy cause of celebration for RPG fanatics, who finally have a game worth latching onto. Although this genre still isn't taking full advantage of the PlayStation's enormous potential (as *FFVII* surely will), *Suikoden* reminds us just how satisfying a good, old-fashioned RPG can be.

FAST FORWARD Although no leap forward in innovation, *Suikoden* delivers the RPG goods with well-crafted characters, imaginative plotting, and top-notch battle sequences (especially for this genre). Simply put, *Suikoden* is the RPG fan's best PlayStation bet...for now, anyway.

GRAPHICS	7	GAMEPLAY	9
SOUND	9	PRESENTATION	8
LIFESPAN	9	ORIGINALITY	7

SIGNAL STRENGTH

8.5

GENRE: FIGHTING
COMPATIBILITY: PLAYSTATION, MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 OR 2 PLAYER

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
Publisher

A Beat-'em-Up that Heats 'em Up

Should you worry that *Tobal No. 1* comes from a publisher with no experience making fight games? Not if the company involved is Squaresoft, known for creating complex role-playing adventures like the *Final Fantasy* series. For their first fighter (also their first PlayStation game), Squaresoft brought in big guns like noted animator Akira Toriyama ("Dragonball Z"). The added talent pays off in a big way, although interested parties should be prepared to accept *Tobal*'s graphics on their own terms.

The first thing you'll probably notice is the game's lack of texture mapping, which might cause some initial disappointment over the graphics. *Tobal*'s punch-and-kick badasses are constructed from Gouraud-shaded polygons, which don't look nearly as crisp or vivid as the texture-mapped characters you'll find in games like *Virtua Fighter 2*.

On the other hand, since *Tobal*'s characters aren't as complex as their texture-mapped counterparts, they drain less memory, which means the game runs faster. How much faster? Try a blistering refresh rate of 60 frames-per-second, making *Tobal*'s animations twice as fast as regular video...and considerably smoother than other PlayStation fighters. Using the memory-stingy Gouraud polygons also enables better lighting and overall resolutions. Furthermore, even though *Tobal*'s characters may not be as dynamic as texture-mapped ones, the game does sport backgrounds that are completely 3D rendered. The action unfolds against some of the best-looking backdrops we've ever seen.

Tobal's characters drain less memory, which means the game runs faster. How much faster? Try a blistering refresh rate of 60 frames-per-second, making Tobal's animations twice as fast as regular video

Nork loves ring-outs. Unless you want to go sailing, stay in the center of the room so he can't push you over the side.

The player controls are impressive, too. Most fight games (like *VF2* or *Tekken*) assign jumping and crouching functions to the D-pad, but not *Tobal*. Instead, these activities are controlled via the left and right buttons. This frees up the D-pad for other uses; pushing up or down on it maneuvers your character in a circular path. Having 360 degrees of ▶

Mary is a big gal, and she's not afraid to flip her enemies.

Watch for Mufu's ultra-vicious high kicks.

One of *Tobal's* best features is the way it makes you gain a decisive advantage before you can flip your opponent.

movement makes you more fearsome (since you can move beside or behind your opponent), and improves the overall quality of the action.

Another "control issue" worth noting involves the standard move used for grabbing and tossing foes. Usually this is a simple procedure: You take hold of your opponent and flip 'em through a quick button combination. It's not so easy in *Tobal*. Instead of immediately throwing your opponent once you've grabbed them, you must first wrestle them and gain a clear advantage. Only when you've proven yourself as the dominant fighter can you execute the throwing part of the sequence. Meanwhile, your opponent is working to counter your grappling attack. This is another innovation that adds heft to the game's challenge.

Udan has a low center of gravity and tends to throw punches to the lower- and mid-sections.

Squaresoft even tosses in some RPG elements in this, their first fighting game. For instance, *Tobal*'s Quest mode locks you up in a 3D dungeon in which you encounter elevators, secret trapdoors, and a collection of monsters. Although this mode isn't terribly challenging, it's still a welcome

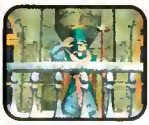
In the Quest Mode, you'll fight all sort of enemies...like this Madmouse.

option—one that adds variety (and longevity) to the game.

By the way, the title refers to the distant planet that hosts this fighting tournament. The "No. 1" that follows "Tobal," implies that there might be more fighting games in Squaresoft's future. If so, that would be good news for gamers hungry for something new within the fighting genre. *Tobal*'s characters might not be as eye-popping as those found in other fight games, but what it lacks visually it more than compensates for with its full 360 degrees of character movement and its extra-smooth animations.

Added gameplay comes courtesy of Tobal's RPG Quest Mode.

In the future, Earth discovers the planet Tobal, which contains a rare and powerful energy source. But Earth isn't the only planet that wants access to the energy. King Tobal decides that to the victor belong the spoils, which means it's time to go ringside.



FAST FORWARD

The characters in *Tobal No. 1* are not fully textured, but what it lacks visually it more than compensates for with its 360 degrees of character movement, extra-smooth animation, and 3D rendered backgrounds. Its new features, such as the grappling move, also make the game worth investigating.

station

GRAPHICS	7	GAMEPLAY	10
SOUND	8	PRESENTATION	9
LIFESPAN	10	ORIGINALITY	9

SIGNAL STRENGTH

9.0

GENRE: RACING
COMPATIBILITY: JOYPAD, MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 OR 2 PLAYER

Wild 'n' Wet and Totally Untamed

Let's say you're riding a 3,000-lb. jet bike, hanging on for dear life. You rip through waves like a gas-powered shark, churning spray as you go. Your monster bike attacks each surface it contacts, carrying you away with it as it leaps everything from highways to glaciers.

Now, what kind of music should accompany fit this intense experience?

20 jet bike racers are available to you. The bad news: you can race them only one at a time.

Once you access the shortcut by busting through this plantation door, your *Jet Moto* racer will be gone with the wind!

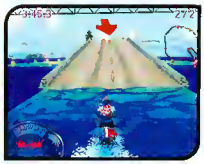
For *Jet Moto*, Sony chose Surf Music, the 60's instrumental sound that pushes high-octane thrills by unleashing snarling electric guitars over pounding, primitive rhythms. It's a perfect choice, resulting in a soundtrack so strong that it really could be enjoyed on its own merits (We know—all games claim that...but this time it's true!).

There's more to *Jet Moto* than explosive music, however. Thanks to TruePhysics™ design, each different surface you travel across has its own texture, and your jet bike handles accordingly. For example, zooming over concrete is faster than slicing through water, just as it would be in real life. TruePhysics™ adds much to the game, as do bike features like turbo boosts and magnetic grappling (which lets you hook onto posts and slingshot around key curves).

Each different surface you travel across has its own texture, and your jet bike handles accordingly. Zooming over concrete, for example, is faster than slicing through water, just as in real life.

Warning! Slippery ice is dangerous—start your turns as early as you can.

Despite rapid speeds and tricky maneuvers, handling a Jet Moto bike couldn't be easier, even for novices. One advantage in having controls this responsive is that you needn't be a gaming superman to make exceptionally cool moves, like hard knee-dipping turns (especially useful for righting yourself after being sideswiped). *Jet Moto*'s controls are so friendly, in fact, that choosing a bike will probably take longer than learning to ride one. (To help you make your choice, mini-dossiers describe each of the twenty bikes in detail.)



If you can't go around them, go over them. Launch your jet bike over your opponents by way of the broken stretches of highway.

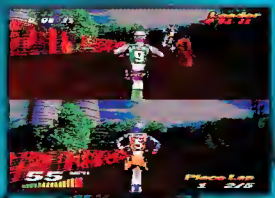
Turbo might be too much: if you boost your speed while racing in the swamps, you could easily hit a tree.

About the only thing *Jet Moto* is missing is a Link Cable option. We're just not given enough ways to play against friends. That aside, however, *Jet Moto* conveys the thrilling freedom of jet biking, and its soundtrack contains some of the coolest game music yet to be heard on the PlayStation.

FAST FORWARD In *Jet Moto*, you drive powerful jet bikes over a variety of surfaces. From its breath-taking jumps and magnetic grappling turns, right down to the blistering-hot surf music soundtrack, *Jet Moto* confidently takes racing games into uncharted waters.

See, in VMX Racing,™ both you and your bike have fully articulated bods, which means infinite opportunities to sling soil. And VMX has lapped those other Motocross games with the haulingest enduros and stadiums in the country. We've road tested and **totally 3-D repro'd 6 tracks** including San Jose National (watch that radioactive waste), and Tijuana (think of yourself as a Mexican jumping bean on full throttle). And for the ultimate visceral experience: **4 different points of view.** So when you kick out the ass-end of your 250 and pop it through the holeshot, you can practically taste exhaust. Trick out your ride with moves like the table-top and the knack-knack, and your competition can taste humility.

So hit the dirt. 'Cause once you rev up VMX, it's sure as hell gonna hit you.



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PIE

Why go out for mud when you can have it delivered?

VMX RACING

PlayStation™

AGE 6+

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GENRE: FIGHTING
COMPATIBILITY: JOYPAD, MEMORY CARD
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER

PERFECT WEAPON

Publisher

100 Moves, 2 Genres...and 1 Big Problem

Arm-twisting throws, ankle-breaking kicks, and jaw-smashing uppercuts...must be a new fighting game, right?

Well, sort of. *Perfect Weapon* brings a unique twist to the fighting game genre by blending an intensive fighting style (a la *Tekken*) with the exploration elements of a game like *Resident Evil*.

Grab the map beacon to unveil your map screen.

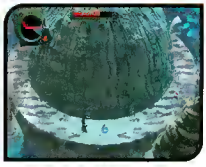
The variety of combat moves is unbelievable for this type of game, letting you choose from over 100 moves, including combos and throws (keep in mind that you don't begin the game with all these maneuvers available to you). Each alien species has its own specific fighting style, and only when that species is defeated can you add their trademark moves to your set of skills.

Furthermore, as you engage enemies, they'll start picking up on your fighting patterns and adjust their attacks accordingly. For example, if you repeatedly high-kick, then they'll start to duck. This smart application of the game's Artificial Intelligence forces you to vary your fighting patterns. It also adds to the level of challenge.

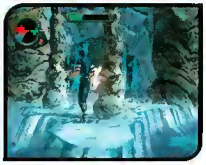
*The variety of combat moves is unbelievable for this type of game, letting you choose from over **100** different maneuvers.*

Perfect Weapon gets another boost by presentation extras, like the plentiful camera angles you can access throughout your exploration of exotic locales. These provide fresh perspectives to the game's 1300 different locations. The rest of the visual makeup is equally pleasing, especially where its graphics and light-sourcing are concerned. The pre-rendered 3D polygon backgrounds are thoroughly beautiful, bursting off the screen with detail and color. All this, plus a terrific soundtrack to boot.

Of course, there's always room for improvement, even in a game with "perfect" in its title. Unlike the rest of *Perfect Weapon*, the controllability comes up severely short. Not only do controls respond sluggishly, but they're often downright frustrating. Your character moves almost as slowly as a zombie in a bad B-movie. This is most annoying when you're in fighting mode, because your character lacks the quickness that we're so accustomed to having in other fighting games. *Perfect Weapon* deserves much praise for its amazing number of fighting moves...and its graphics are nothing to sneeze at, either. Unfortunately, the sluggish controls really cause gameplay to grind down, and this ends up making *Perfect Weapon* perfectly tedious and difficult to enjoy.

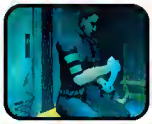


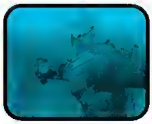
Go around this dome for two health icons.



A Monk and a Shumeis (a doglike creature) are waiting to ambush you through this opening.

Capt. Blake Hunter, champion martial artist and top agent of the Earth Command Defense Force, unwinds in his dressing room after winning a hot bout. Then ambushed by an alien creature, he's transported to a strange new dimension.





FAST FORWARD *Perfect Weapon* gives fight game fans plenty to cheer about...namely, over 100 different possible moves and tremendous graphics. On the other hand, gameplay suffers from molasses-slow controls, which respond way too sluggishly.

GRAPHICS	7	GAMEPLAY	3
SOUND	5	PRESENTATION	5
LIFESPAN	3	ORIGINALITY	6

SIGNAL STRENGTH 6.5

BATTLE STATIONS

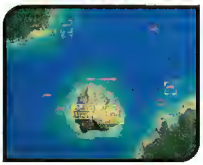
Smoke on the Water—Fire in the Sky

It's a rough, rolling sea...and it's getting rougher by the minute. The crewmembers of your battle-tested destroyer are scrambling to their stations just as the first barrage of shells pounds your hull. The enemy's harbor—your objective—is in sight, but there is a determined pair of enemy subs standing in your way, and all their massive firepower is aimed at you.

If the thought of sea warfare sets your blood afire, you'll want to check out *Battlestations*, Electronic Arts' new maritime action title. On the other hand, if you aren't already interested in combat fought out on top of the waves, then *Battlestations* isn't likely to win you over to naval action games.

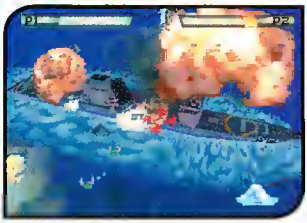
This two-player action title offers the immediacy and intensity of ship-to-ship combat in a variety of campaign formats. Even such environmental conditions ice and fog affect both strategy and tactics

Both of *Battlestations*' distinctive modes offer one- and two-player options. In Arcade mode, you square off against your opponent in a series of one-on-one battles (in the vessels of your choice), earning points and promotions based on your cumulative victories. In the Wargames mode (called "Campaign" in the single player format), you and your opponent choose fleets, commanders, missions, and objectives.



In the Campaign/Wargames mode, you get a clear picture of the enemy's movements before you must issue orders.

Still, it's at the tactical level where *Battlestations* earns its stripes. Depending upon the vessels involved, you'll have a full array of weapons to keep your enemy at bay. The resulting explosions prove to be rewarding; watching your firepower shatter the massive hulls of carriers and other larger craft is a feast for both the eyes and ears.

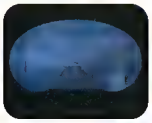


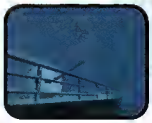
Direct hits register larger-than-life results in the heat of battle.

Keep in mind that the key word here is "naval": Seacraft don't maneuver like their counterparts of land and air, so don't look to *Battlestations* for breakneck pacing and rapid maneuverability. If, on the other hand, the unique nature of sea combat intrigues you, then *Battlestations* is sure to grab you. A fast-paced fighter or complex, multi-layered strategy sim this isn't. But if you are looking for a solid seafaring entry in the battle action category, *Battlestations* has no peers—at least not on the PlayStation. Not yet.

Even though you agonized over choosing the smartest strategy, *Battlestations* still comes down to one-on-one struggles between the iron beasts of the seas.

The enemy is in your line of fire. Your crewmen sight the approaching enemy vessel. The cry "Battlestations!" rings out while smoke streams from a freshly fired deck gun.





FAST FORWARD Although it won't win any new converts to the challenge and excitement of simulated sea battles, *Battlestations* offers a unique alternative to the action gamer looking for something a little different. If, on the other hand, you're a fan of naval warfare games, then *Battlestations* is a must-have.

previews

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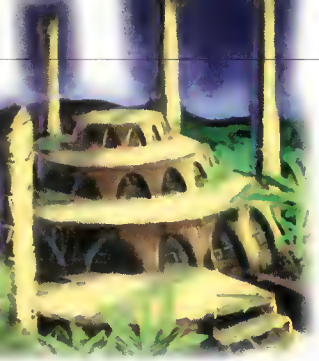
final fantasy vii .40-41

Can *Resident Evil 2* possibly break as much ground as the first game? See page 36 and find out!

Final Fantasy VII promises to push the unconventional RPG genre even further—and the game's only available on the PlayStation. Over 100 artists have worked on this sweeping cinematic epic. See what all the hype is about on page 40.

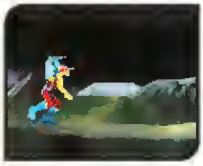
Take the *Porsch challenge!* The game's been in development for over a year, and those who've seen the results have been duly impressed. See page 38.



wild 9s

GENRE: ACTION/ADVENTURE
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER
RELEASE DATE: APRIL

Wild 9s will mark the 32-bit debut of a major 16-bit developer: Shiny Entertainment. That's right—the same people who brought you the definitive 16-bit title, *Earthworm Jim*, are preparing to enter the 32-bit realm with a new exploration into adventure gaming. *Wild 9s* boasts over 60,000 hand-drawn animations, powered by Shiny's innovative new "Freeflow" game engine, which creates lush natural landscapes and seamlessly integrates character movements and reactions. Such eye-catching renderings promise to push the PlayStation's muscular graphics power to its full extent.



Character movements mesh effortlessly with ever-shifting backgrounds.

Wex and his friends must cross a stunning series of landscapes in bringing an end to the Domination.

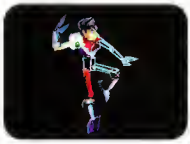
The story is intriguing. As the leader of a ragtag band of eight teenagers, Wex (your character) is in every way a typical 21st century teenager. Unfortunately, the world he finds himself in is anything but commonplace. Another character, Kam, is the aged head of an evil outfit called the Domination (he's the head of the group in another way, too—his huge, oversized face occupies the side of a mountain, Mt. Rushmore-style). The Domination is systematically destroying the Annapolis Cluster, the solar system Wex calls home. A good-guy organization is attempting to counter the Domination's efforts, and has brought Wex and company together to stop Kam and crew from turning everything in this solar system to dust.

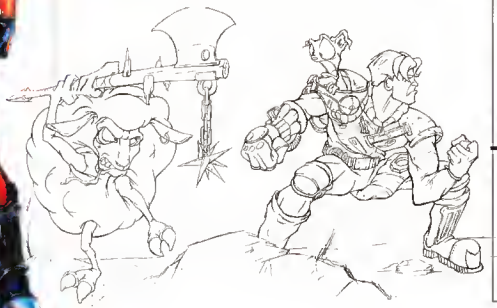
While promising stunning graphics, Shiny says these good looks will not come at the expense of slower game play. With plenty in its powerplant, *Wild 9s* seems like an adventure designed to send PlayStation consoles into overdrive when the game arrives in April.

Wild 9s boasts over 60,000 hand-drawn animations, powered by Shiny's innovative new "Freeflow" game engine.

Your nemesis: Kam, a living head on the side of a mountain.

Painstakingly hand-drawn characters boast impeccable detail and natural range of motion.



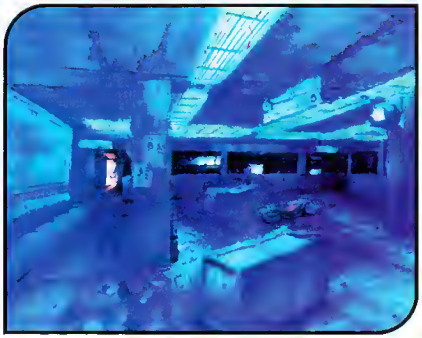


GENRE: ADVENTURE
PLAYERS: 1 PLAYER
RELEASE DATE: APRIL

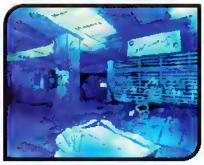
resident evil 2

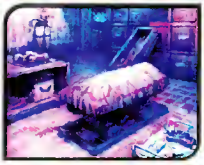
CAPCOM Publisher

It might have been the scariest video game ever made—it was undoubtedly one of the most successful. Capcom's *Resident Evil* not only outsold every other PlayStation game on the planet, but also changed the way video games presented drama. And now, only a year later, Capcom is readying *Resident Evil 2*, probably the most anticipated PlayStation title to date.



These development illustrations show the carefully designed environments players can expect to find when they embark on their own zombie hunt.





Hmm, what could be under this sheet? Perhaps a flesh-eating zombie...

Leon Scott Kennedy

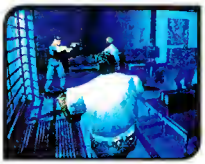
Leon Scott Kennedy is a rookie cop who just started his beat in Raccoon City.

Currently in development in Japan, *Resident Evil 2* picks up where the first game left off. After the S.T.A.R.S. agents cleared out the mansion, Raccoon City returned to an uneasy peace, but soon afterward a virus spread through town, transforming once-peaceful citizens into grisly, flesh-eating zombies. There are also weird experimental creations running around who were formed by Umbrella (the organization behind the biological experiments in the first Resident Evil). Things couldn't get much worse; the toxin carried by the virus will turn the town into a bloodbath...if you don't come to the rescue.

Resident Evil 2 contains a variety of much-needed improvements that should make for better player/character interaction and stronger voice acting. The new game is also said to be bigger, with a much more involved plot, more areas to explore, and (of course) plenty of weapons.

Instead of the old S.T.A.R.S. agents, this time around players assume the role of Leon Kennedy. Kennedy's a rookie of the Raccoon City Police department, and for some strange reason, he isn't affected by the virus. Players can also choose to portray Elza Walker, a street-smart 19-year-old motorcycle racer caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. With incredibly realistic surroundings, players roam the streets and surrounding buildings of Raccoon City for clues to the origin of the virus, which is no longer confined to just a ▶

Here come the zombies! Use your shotgun to blow them back to their graves.

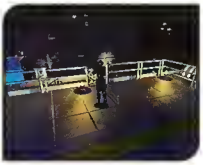


Wearing your bulletproof vest isn't a bad idea, especially now.

single mansion, but threatens to spread like wildfire from hell.

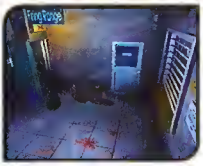
The game-play in *Resident Evil 2* will follow the same basic layout as the first game, but Capcom has promised more nail-biting excitement, with a variety of much-needed improvements that should make for stronger voice acting and better player/character interaction. The game itself is also said to be bigger, with a much more involved plot, more areas to explore and interact with, and of course, plenty of weapons. Since developer Shinji Mikami was able to work with a longer time-table, there are other exciting features that have been added. These include bulletproof vest and jackets (which can be worn or taken off, depending on a player's present circumstances), better light-source shading, and improved character renderings and animations.

Resident Evil was very much an experimental product for the Capcom development team. There's little doubt that the sequel gives Capcom a chance to refine gameplay, as well as cash in on the success of the first title, which was hugely popular. The real question, though, is this: Can *Resident Evil 2* possibly break as much ground as the first game? Gamers with a taste for action (you know, the bloody kind) will be eagerly awaiting the answer to that question when *Resident Evil 2* materializes this April.



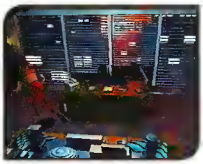
One of the features you'll notice in Resident Evil 2 is the improved light-sourced shading.

The Japanese version of the game is entitled *Biohazard 2*. Like other popular titles that are introduced in Japan before they find their way to American retailers, *Resident Evil 2* is known by different names to reflect marketing differences between the two countries. Other examples of this phenomenon include the upcoming *Mega Man 8* (or *Rockman 8*, in Japan) and *Soul Blade* (*Soul Edge*).



In the firing range, you'll encounter ferocious mad dogs that can and should be used for target practice. Fire away!

"Mister, can you spare some change?" The giant zombies are especially frightening, but as they say, the bigger they are...



Elza checks out a room for weapons and/or any signs of the undead.

Your hellish nightmare begins at, of all places, the police station.

Elza Walker

Elza Walker, a 19- year-old motorcycle stunt racer and college student.

GENRE

PLAYERS

RELEASE DATE

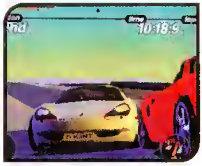
porsche challenge

Publisher

After winning an official license from the legendary automaker, Sony UK set out to make the most technically advanced and realistic racing video game ever. To make sure *Porsche Challenge* remains true to its subject, Sony UK has used inside info about Porsche's test tracks, as well as manufacturer-supplied specs for the new Boxster (Porsche's high-speed convertible). The game's been in development for over a year, and those who've seen the results have been duly impressed.

Each driver in *Porsche Challenge* has his or her own unique driving style.

Reportedly, *Porsche Challenge*'s regular game graphics run as smoothly as the polished FMV intros of other driving games. A total of 25 exacting circuits can be driven by any of six different drivers—each of which is outfitted with their own unique driving style and a car based on the Boxster's design. Sony UK intends for *Porsche Challenge* to combine the smoothly rendered realism of a racing game like *Outrun* with more forgiving controls, like those you might find in an arcade driving game.


No, this isn't a brochure pic of the Boxster—it's an actual game screen.

SPECS

- **Price:** **$39,980** (US)
- **Performance:**
  Top Speed: 149 mph
  0-60 mph: 6.1 seconds
  0-1/4 mi.: 14.7 seconds
- **Engine:**
  Water cooled DOHC 24-valve flat-6
  - Displacement: 2480cc, 151 cu. in.
  - Bore x stroke: 3.37 x 2.83 in.
  - Compression ratio: 11.0:1
  - Max. engine speed: 6600 rpm
- **Horsepower:** 201 bhp @ 6000 rpm
- **Torque:** 181 lb-ft. @ 4500 rpm
- **Weight:** 2755 lbs
- **Layout:** mid engine/rear drive
- **Wheels:** 17 x 7J f, 17 x 9J

Sony UK: Two for the Road

GENRE

PLAYERS

RELEASE DATE

rapid racer

Publisher

Water-based racing games seem to be all the rage lately (e.g. *Jet Moto*), a fact that hasn't escaped Sony UK. Now the British developer is working on a high-speed motorboat spectacular called *Rapid Racer*. This one's still a "mystery title" (i.e., the game is still early in development), but we have learned that *Rapid Racer* is a lap-based racing game. Sony UK has dedicated a full six months to refining the physics model alone—just to make sure each wave and wake seem as realistic as what you'd see from a local beach. Running at an amazing 60 fps, *Rapid Racer* will feature a split screen mode and six aquatic courses, each comprised of three tracks and oceans full of obstacles. In addition to the standard water obstacles (buoys and reefs), the courses will also have a variety of shortcuts and other play modes to increase the game's lifespan and value.

Beautifully rendered speed boats like these should be portrayed with incredible realism in *Rapid Racer*.

Although Sony UK had to make slight concessions on the graphics to keep the game running fast, texture-mapped oceans like this should offer incredibly realistic racing action.

Sony UK

After thrilling gamers with the texture-mapped extravaganza *NBA Shoot Out*, Sony UK is shifting gears—literally. Now the programming powerhouse is busily tightening the nuts and bolts on two racing games that should appear later this year. Both *Porsche Challenge* and *Rapid Racer* are being created solely for the PlayStation. The initial reports from *station's* UK liaison say this third generation of PlayStation titles shows how Sony UK is putting some serious graphics muscle to work in its games. Both products have been in development for over a year, and although neither game has been formally announced by SCEA (Sony's US division), both of them are expected to hit the States sometime in '97.

TOMB RAIDER

Have you got yours yet?

If you know Tomb Raider, you know why Lara Croft is the #1 cover girl in gaming. No other game has won more awards, sold more copies, or kicked more ass. Hardcore gamers have made Tomb Raider the undisputed megahit of the year. Have your got yours yet?

Game of the Year
-PS Extreme

Game of the Year
-Game Fan

Game of the Year
-Computer Player

Action Game of the Year
-PC Gamer

Adventure Game of the Year
-Ultra Game Players

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SEGA SATURN
CORE DESIGN LTD

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Lara Croft, gaming's #1 covergirl.

GENRE

COMPATIBILITY

PLAYERS

final fantasy VII

Publisher

The countdown has officially begun. This June, the Playstation will mark the arrival of one of its most anticipated titles—*Final Fantasy VII*. To whet appetites before its arrival, Squaresoft included a demo of the RPG monster with *Tobal No.1*. From what we've seen and played of *Final Fantasy VII*, the game looks to be the best all-around installment of this popular series. (It will also certainly be the largest *FF* game, easily filling up two compact discs. If such a huge title were crammed onto a cartridge-based game, the costs of extra chips would drive the pricetag up to a couple of hundred bucks.) Considering that Sony has secured sole development rights for the 32-bit *Final Fantasy* series, there's only one way to experience the best this genre-shaping RPG has to offer—and that's on the PlayStation.

Squaresoft artists have designed some of the most awe-inspiring rendered characters and backgrounds ever created for a Role-Playing Game.

Using SGI workstations, Squaresoft artists have designed some of the most awe-inspiring rendered characters and backgrounds ever created for a role-playing game. These rich backgrounds are combined with polished scene transitions and three-quarter overhead camera perspectives. When these visual elements are assembled, an undeniably cinematic look springs from the game—with the characters you're controlling at the very heart of the action.

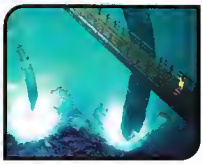
In the latest installment, a corporation called Shinra (located in the futuristic city of Midgar) possesses all of the world's energy and controls all politics. The company's power is so pervasive that a resistance group is soon formed, called Avalanche. That's where our hero Cloud comes in. He's all grown-up now (he was a mere child in *FFVI*) and joins Avalanche, but only for selfish mercenary reasons.

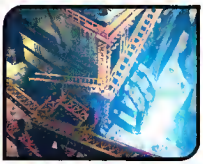
The 3-D combat scenes incorporate some incredible camera views.

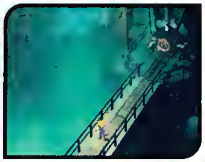
Barret uses a Boh spell to take out multiple enemies.

Accompanying him in his fight is Aerith, a good witch with amazingly powerful spells, and Barret, an enormous man whose hands have been replaced with large Gatling-type guns. Besides being able to play as these characters, word has it that ▶

Cloud arrives in the city of Midgar and is met by Barret and Aerith, who convince him to join the resistance group, Avalanche.







The pre-rendered backgrounds in Final Fantasy VII are simply amazing. Just imagine moving your characters throughout these worlds. Exceptional detail highlights every area.

there is also a tattooed lion-like beast named Red 13 that will also be controllable.

Veteran *Final Fantasy* players will recognize the game's use of the standard turn-based battle sequences. Like earlier games in the series, players have a time limit for initiating fight sequences (or else the enemy will start attacking). In terms

There are plenty of new spells to try out like Cloud's Cross Slash.

of magic, gamers can expect *FFVII* to utilize the PlayStation's graphic prowess to illustrate its spell-casting. Other new additions to battle scenes include a Break Limit bar for each character. When full, this bar allows a

Who's Who in Final Fantasy VII

Aerith

Age: 22
Birthday: 2/7
Height: 163 cm
Bloodtype: O
Weapon: staff

Berret

Age: 35
Birthday: 12/15
Height: 197 cm
Bloodtype: O
Weapon: chain gun

Cait

Age: unknown
Birthday: unknown
Height: unknown
Bloodtype: unknown
Weapon: unknown

Cid

Age: 32
Birthday: 2/22
Height: 178 cm
Bloodtype: B
Weapon: spear

Cloud

Age: 21
Birthday: 8/19
Height: 173 cm
Bloodtype: AB
Weapon: sword

Red XIII

Age: 48
Birthday: unknown
Height: unknown
Bloodtype: unknown
Weapon: claws, teeth

Sith

Age: unknown
Birthday: unknown
Height: unknown
Bloodtype: unknown
Weapon: unknown

Tifa

Age: 20
Birthday: 5/3
Height: 167 cm
Bloodtype: B
Weapon: fists

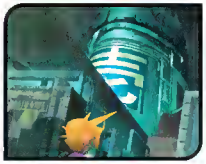
Vincent

Age: 27
Birthday: 10/13
Height: 184 cm
Bloodtype: A
Weapon: gun, claw

Yuffie

Age: 16
Birthday: 11/20
Height: 160 cm
Bloodtype: A
Weapon: four-point star

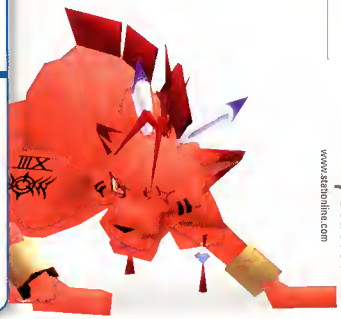
RPG players will recognize the turn-based combat system.



Cloud looks up at the towering Shinra corporation.

character to use a special move. Every time your character takes a hit and loses life energy, the bar fills up. Consequently, the more damage your character takes, the faster the bar is filled up. Also, from what we have seen, the battle sequences gain much visceral power from having a variety of different camera angles.

If you've had a chance to play the demo, you already know that waiting for the final version of *Final Fantasy VII* version will require the patience of a saint. If this latest installment has as engrossing a story as the other games in the series, and if its graphics are as visually rich as the demo suggests, then fans of this genre should prepare themselves to experience the most revolutionary RPG ever to hit any game system.



strategies

twisted metal 2 .44-45

Here it is: station's comprehensive *Tomb Raider* strategy guide, showing you how to complete all 15 levels of the game. Also covered: specific puzzle solutions, strategies for defeating tenacious enemies, and step-by-step guide for mastering the physical movements necessary to get Lara through the ancient ruins. Get ready—your *Tomb Raider* education begins on page 50.

tomb raider .46-53

Third time's a charm.
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- Dozens of brand new fighting combos. • Improved game and control dynamics.

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PLAYMATES INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT PIE

TWISTED METAL 2

Car-crunching mayhem, screaming padastrians, and agonizing deaths—it can mean only one thing: You'va wandered into the sequal to *Twistad Metal*. Yes, it's time to buckla up for another urban destruction derby (again sponsored by the wicked villain Calypso). This year's tournament includas new vehicles, environments, weapons and special moves. Strategy is both more complicated and more nacessary than in the first gama, although the same general idea is at work in both games: Prowl tha highways and byways, searching for opponents to vaporize with your weaponry. The last car rolling is daclarad the winner, and its drivar can have any wish fulfilled.

In *Twisted Metal 2*, "advanced attack" moves can be used in conjunction with weapons, power-ups, and othar maneuvers to create killar "combo attacks." For example, one of your advanced attacks is called a "freeze burst." Uncork one against an enemy and you'll render him as still as a block of ice. Once he's frozan, you can follow up by planting a remote bomb near the enemy vehicla. Then all you have to do is sit back and enjoy the fireworks to come. Combination attacks like this require extra effort and finesse, but they often deliver big payoffs...and explosive payloads.

The naw game's mass destruction isn't limitad to L.A. Calypso's tournament is now held in eight locations all over tha world (Moscow, New York, Paris, Hong Kong, etc.). Most of these environments contain multiple street levels, meaning you can explore these places in greater depth. Cooler still is the game's Transporter, which can relocata you to other areas.

The first game's most identifiabla character, Needles Kane (the insanely evil clown that drives the ice cream battle-wagon appears only in brief cameos). Other memorable vehicles from the first Twisted Metal have also raturned, including Mr. Grimm and Warthog. Additionally, twelve new drivers join the tournament ranks this tima around. Thankfully, you've also got spacial weapons in your arsenal, including supernovas, boomerang blasts, and tornado spins. You'll also find planty of weapon pick-ups, such as the remote bombs that can be detonated from a safe distanca.

cities

Los Angeles

- Descend into the fire pit to obtain a lightning weapon.
- Destroy generators and shop for weapons.

Paris

- Set off a remote bomb to destroy the Eiffel Tower.
- All good things come to those who wait. Fire like crazy when the opponent materializes.
- Leap from rooftop to rooftop for weapons and first aid kits.

Moscow

- Position yourself up top and shoot homing missiles down on enemies.
- Watch the transporter for first aid kits.

Amazonia

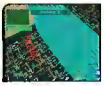
- Knock out the pyramid walls to find hidden rooms.

▶ Destroy the statue for access to the underground tunnels.

- Wait for enemies on top of the pyramid, then let 'em have it.

New York

- Blow up the block to get to the pool.
- **Warning:** It's easy to become trapped in the locker rooms.
- Here's a good place to send enemies careening off the side (try ricochet bombs for this).



◀ There is a secret code on the city.

- Blow open the elevator doors, then fall down the shaft for weapons and a first aid kit.

Antarctica

- The glaciers are constantly shifting.
- Avoid the crevasse when there is more than one opponent near it.

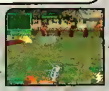
▶ Enemies that materialize make easy targets.

Holland

- Use turbo frequently in order to keep moving.

▶ Hide your vehicle in this rock enclave to protect your back.

Hong Kong



▶ Don't use lightning in the temple.

- You'll be crushed if you don't know your train schedule.
- Learn what roads turn into dead ends.

Axel

Grasshopper

Hammerhead

Mr. Grimm

Mr Slam

Outlaw 2

basic tips

- Start collecting weapons as soon as you enter a level.
- It's easy to accidentally blow yourself up with the remote bomb, especially when unloading your arsenal on an enemy.
- You will "hear" an enemy's special weapon as soon as their vehicle comes into your vicinity. As soon as you hear it, zig-zag or use turbo to avoid being hit.
- Master the special attacks that lead into combination moves.
- Try to isolate and concentrate on one enemy at a time.
- Learn where the first aid kits reappear.

bosses

Boss 1: Minion

- Increase your arsenal before you begin.
- Wait on top of the pyramid until he appears. Then let loose…
- Avoid going head-to-head with this boss. Instead, try sticking-and-moving.
- Hiding in secret rooms lets you avoid his shots while he gets hit by yours.

▶ Don't forget to grab the homing missiles before Minion appears.

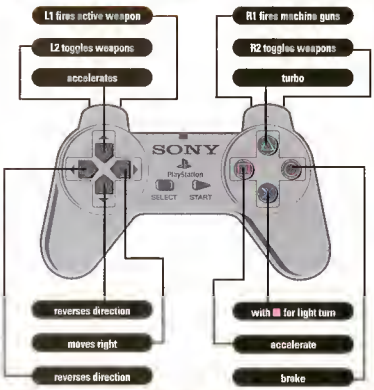
Boss 2: Sweet Tooth

- Avoid the subway tunnels or prepare to be bombarded.
- You're an easy target in the bays.
- Use lots of mines and shields.
- Don't lead him to the first aid kits or he might grab them.
- Napalm is very effective.
- The flaming skull is hard to corner. He'll leap over you and attack from behind. Be ready to perform a lot of 180s.

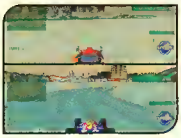
▶ Grab the power-ups in the bay, but watch out for Sweet Tooth.

Vehicle	Handling	Armor	Special	Speed
Roadkill	intermediate	2	3	3
Twister	ultra-tight	1	4	5
Axel	intermediate	3	3	2
Mr. Slam	sluggish	4	5	1
Shadow	intermediate	2	4	3
Hammerhead	sluggish	3	3	1
Outlaw 2	intermediate	2	3	4
Warthog	sluggish	4	3	2
Mr. Grimm	tight	1	5	4
Grasshopper	tight	1	2	3
Thumper	intermediate	2	4	3
Spectre	tight	1	4	4

TWISTED METAL 2 CONTROLS



2-player mode



You can either play against your friend in the challenge mode or team up with him in the Co-op tournament. Experiment with different tag team moves. Also you can switch from a horizontal view to a vertical view depending on your preference.

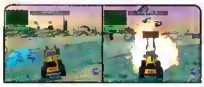
special attacks

- Freeze ..... ◀▶▲
- Mine ..... ▶◀▼
- Napalm ..... ▶◀▲
- Shield ..... ▲▲▶
- Cloaking Device ..... ▶▼◀▲
- Rear ..... ◀▶▼
- Jump ..... ▲▲◀

various uses

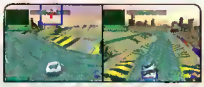
▲ While visiting the Big Apple, freeze your opponent and push them over the side.

▶ Plant a remote bomb next to your frozen opponent.



▲ Use your special weapons on iced enemies.

◀ Frozen opponents can't escape from subway trains.



▲ If you want to snag the health icon, be prepared to make a high jump.

▲ A shield is handy when you're entering fire. Activate your shield if crossing the burning lava.

▶ Smash into opponents with your shield.

Roadkill

Shadow

Spectre

Thumper

Twister

Warthog

TOMB RAIDER

Barreling at you like a runaway boulder, it's *Tomb Raider*...the gaming adventure of a lifetime! Already one of the PlayStation's most popular titles, *Tomb Raider* is a thrilling 3-D action/adventure that leads you through ancient civilizations as you search for the lost Scion, a mythic icon that can be used as an energy source of enormous power. Natla, President of the mysterious Natla Technologies, has commissioned you, Lara Croft (daughter of a nobleman and celebrated adventurer), to find the Scion and return it to her. Your journey takes you from the Incan ruins of Peru, to the sunken civilization of Atlantis, and even through the remnants of ancient Egypt. Warning! Peril awaits you at every turn!

For the experienced player, *Tomb Raider* will provide a variety of challenges, testing every facet of your gaming skills. Novice gamers may find the going rather tough, particularly in later levels; if this describes you, this guide should serve as a useful "hand-holder" to help you navigate the trickier parts, and show you the way in and out of the game's many tight spots. But before you can journey to the heart of this adventure, you must first master its basic moves and strategies.

To get comfortable with Lara's movements and physical capabilities, it's a good idea to spend a few minutes in her home before embarking on the mission itself. This presents the perfect environment for mastering the different kinds of jumps you'll make and the ways you'll need to approach each of them. It will also give you a chance to perfect Lara's various rolls, leaps, flips, and other moves, and even her swimming technique—all of which you'll need in order to progress through this challenging adventure.

WARNING: *Tomb Raider* is chock-full of traps and sudden drops, so tread carefully wherever you go.

Always look before you leap. Estimating distance and understanding the kind of jump you face is essential to successfully making the leap.

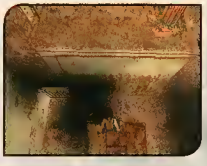
Use your compass at the beginning of each level to get a general idea of the direction you're heading. This is especially important in some of the more maze-like levels, and since there is no map to guide you, your own sense of direction is all you've got. If you become disoriented, refer back to your compass and retrace your steps, if necessary.

It's imperative that you walk (by pressing ▲ or ▼ on the D-pad while holding down the R1 key) in treacherous areas (i.e., near ravines and cliff edges, around traps, near hazards, etc.). And while Lara can easily run off an edge (possibly to her death), she cannot step off an edge. This is one of the keys to setting up successful jumps. There are exceptions to this rule, however, especially when it comes to collapsing platforms and ramps.

If Lara is able to push or pull a movable object, she'll assume a semi-crouch position in front of that object when you push the ⊗ button. Holding that button, press ▲ on the D-pad (to push) or press ▼ (to pull), depending on which action you want her to take. To claim the weapons, ammo, keys, icons, and other power-ups you find, position Lara right beside the object (by walking—hold R1 and push ▲ on the D-pad), then push the ⊗ button. Lara will take care of the rest.

Lara can leap in a variety of ways. Recognizing what leap works best in conjunction with each jump is essential to exploring the game's environments—and keeping Lara alive long enough to do just that. The main leaps are...

▼Standing leap

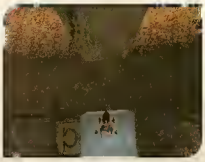


From Lara's normal position, press D-pad ▲ and the ◉ button simultaneously.

▼Running leap

First, estimate the distance you'll need to run before starting your leap. Then, press ▲ on the D-pad and immediately afterward, the ◉ button.

▼Standing leap-grab



Do a Standing Leap, but as soon as Lara is airborne, press the ⊗ button.

▼Running leap-grab

Do a Running Leap, but as soon as Lara is airborne, press the ⊗ button. Once Lara has caught the edge of the ledge, press ▲ on the D-pad to make her climb up to the surface.

It's important to keep in mind that every level of Tomb Raider is laid out on an invisible grid, so determining the actions you need to make before you're forced to make them is essential—particularly since the price

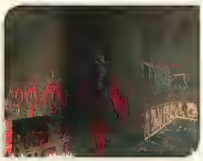
of a misjudged leap or extra step will often be your life. Within this grid layout, you'll recognize three lengths of jumps (along with a few variations):

▼One-length jumps

When you're standing on a square platform, column, or pillar and the area you're trying to reach is one square's length away, you need to make a basic one-square jump. Stand at the edge of your square and do a standing leap to the next square.

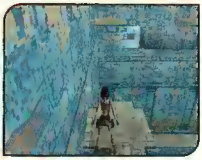
CAUTION: Be careful not to over-jump your target!

▼Two-length jumps



When you're two lengths away from where you need to be, you have two options. First, you can walk to the cliff's edge and perform a Standing Leap-Grab. Alternately, you can make a Running Leap.

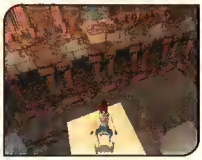
▼Three-length jumps



These are the longest jumps you'll face—they require a Running Leap-Grab.

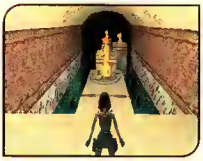
In addition, you can expect to find these variations:

▼Diagonal jumps



Whenever possible, align Lara's path of trajectory with the object she wishes to approach. When this isn't possible, you're facing the probability of a Diagonal Jump, which can be tricky. Sometimes a Running Leap-Grab is called for, via a diagonal approach to the edge Lara needs to grab. Line her up as close as possible to the edge she's aiming for and follow this with a Running Leap-Grab. Keep in mind that Lara can adjust her angle of approach in mid-air, although only slightly (to the right or left, by using the appropriate D-pad button).

▼Series jumps



On a couple of occasions, you'll confront a series of columns that are spaced out in single lengths. Typically, these columns are surrounded by water and emit a flame. This calls for a series of quickly executed leaps to minimize potential damage to Lara's health. To do this, hold down the ⊗ button and ▲ on the D-pad at the same time.

Sometimes, Lara must Leap-Grab a crevice too small for her to stand upon. This is when she needs to shimmy (while holding the ⊗ button, press the appropriate D-pad button) to the location where she can either lift herself or drop to a safe place, by releasing the ⊗ button.

The beasts you'll face in the earlier levels can all be handled with the pistols you start the game with. However, as you progress, finding and securing the more powerful weapons is crucial to fending off the bigger beasts and resilient bosses you're going to encounter later. Also, moving while firing will help reduce the damage your enemies can inflict on Lara while you fight them off. Remember: It's true that the bigger they are, the harder they fall (and the harder they are to kill).

And as far as the skeletal mummies and horsemen are concerned, their "fall" can kill you if you're standing too close to them. Use natural barriers as defenses against enemies firing at you, and practice firing while jumping (both backward and side-to-side) during earlier levels to prepare you for the tough-as-nails warriors of Egypt and the Lost City. When possible, shoot from the highest possible vantage point (particularly with pack animals, like lions, wolves, and panthers).

Remember that gorillas can climb!

Also, notice that Lara "trains" on her target when it's in range. Even if your quarry ducks out of sight during combat, keep pressing the fire button (the ⊗ button, that is); as soon as your prey re-emerges, Lara will resume firing.

Keep in mind that if Lara's health dwindles during combat, hit Select and use those Medikits. They'll prove to be life-savers again and again.

Tomb Raider Strategy: Level by Level

1 The Caves

Navigate a network of caves ..Scoot past snarling wolves, hungry bears, and feral bats ..Treacherous traps around every corner

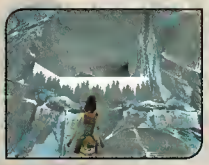
Check your compass if you're in doubt—much of this terrain is hard to distinguish and locating hidden items depends upon your familiarity with your present surroundings and past travels. In Level One, you'll face wolves, darts, bats, and maybe even a bear (but none should present a serious threat to you).

Lara's got enemies in low places. Always take your shots from on high!

If Lara automatically looks up, there's a good reason, so head that way.

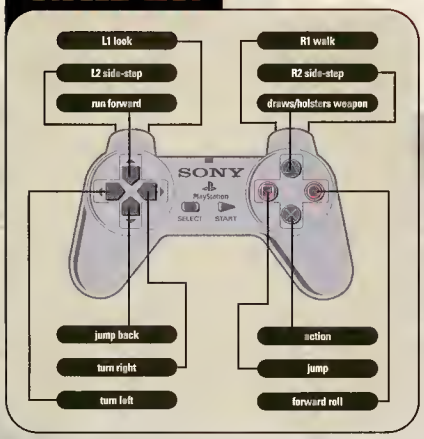
Keep your eyes open for lit areas that have dark edges, where Lara can grab hold and hoist herself up (for instance, after jumping).

Check areas with inclines to see if Lara can climb them. Also: Look out for the door that opens at regular intervals. When the door opens, run for it!



It's not for nothing that Lara suddenly cocks her head. Start climbing! ▶

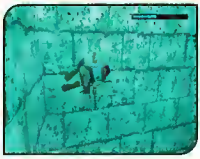
TOMB RAIDER CONTROLS



2 The City of Vilcabamba

A subterranean city awaits...Vicious wolfpacks attack...Beware collapsing floors!...Find hidden keys...Jumps grow more hazardous.

To get past the wolves, keep moving while you fire. They make sudden lunges, so making quick leaps is a good counter-strategy to use here.



There are *two* levers to pull in the underwater caverns. Watch your air!

Keep your eyes peeled for a bear near the troughs in the open room.

Find a silver key and gold idol.

Later, your jumping ability will be tested (be sure to find the opening first—you really need to know where you're going).

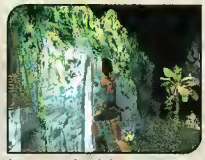
Finally, beware the first pendulum trap: timing is everything, and don't run too far!

This pendulum trap swings your way in a heartbeat, and there's more ahead...

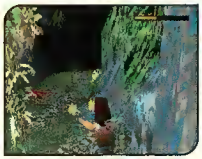
3 The Lost Valley

Fight your way through a hidden valley of dinosaurs...Search for three machine cogs...You must lower the dam and stop the waterfall.

When emerging from the pool at the waterfall's base, look for a point of refuge the wolves can't get to. This will



Lara must make this bridge jump to find one of the three dam cogs.



Red raptors come at you fast, so shoot them as you jump...

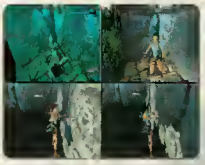
give you a chance to arm yourself and fire without incurring damage yourself.

As soon as you find the Lost Valley, watch out—there's a red raptor coming right at you! Keep plugging away at him until he falls, then look out for another one just ahead. As soon as you kill the second raptor, find the cave entrance to higher ground immediately—there's a huge T-rex coming your way, and it can take you down in one quick gulp!

The *T. rex* is ferocious but easy to maneuver around. Avoid those jaws!

Look for climbing points and pools at the base of waterfalls. These access points lead to secret items and the three cogs you'll need to use to lower the dam, before you'll be able to swim your way out of this level. Before you can make your exit, however, you'll have to deal with Larson, Natla's henchman. Shoot at him (preferably from a safe vantage point), but don't try to chase him. There's no point; you can't kill him until a later level, and he'll keep shooting at you as long as you keep chasing.

Worth finding: the shotgun near the cog mechanism.



You must find three dam cogs, all hidden in the Lost Valley itself, to stop the waterfall. Install them, pull the switch, and once you've got each of them working, Lara will enjoy easy access to the secret sites that the river concealed—and is well on her way to moving onto the next level.

4 Tomb of Qualopec

Your introduction to* Tomb Raider's *puzzles...Boulders, movable blocks, and disappearing floors...A maze of beasts awaits to slow your progress.

gorillas, and Pierre, the cutthroat adventurer. Keep moving, and stay on higher ground where possible.

Boulder strategy 101: Walk only far enough to trigger it, then get away!

Your first boulder trap awaits you as soon as you enter the main room. Watch everything, run quickly, and veer out of the way at your first opportunity.

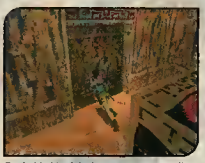
Keep a sharp eye because the movable blocks mask key entrances.

You'll need to push that block aside to get through the exit.

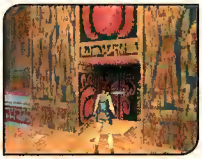
Step carefully around the knives, because even the slightest contact with them can sap your health considerably.

The switch situated above a collapsible platform cannot be accessed. Back up to the edge of the platform (using a variety of camera angles to constantly check Lara's feet positions), then take one step back, and as the platform collapses, push the ⊗ button. She'll grab the ledge, and you can buffer her fall (thereby keeping her as safe as possible).

When you locate the throne room displaying the scion, be sure to shoot the guard before going for the scion.



Push this block in far enough and you'll find another one just to your left.



It's a trap, but you need to go through the floor anyway. Forget the lever.

Once you've taken the scion, run through the trembling rooms to get back to where you started from.

Again, Larson waits for you at the end of these troubles. Once more, keep moving while you fire at him.

5 St. Francis' Folly

Lots of leaping...Use Lara's grabbing ability and the angled platforms...Maneuver through 4 dangerous rooms...Find 4 keys and you escape!

There's a secret room beyond the wall, reached by making jumps from column to column. Once there, you'll need to make two angled jumps off the beveled surfaces so you can grab the room's ledge, and retrieve the pick-ups.

This tricky angled-rebound jump requires that Lara hit the first platform perfectly—on its upper left corner...

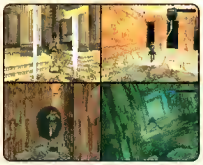
...and climb up to the secret area above the ledge. Avoid that collapsing floor!

The crocodiles you'll tangle with lumber along slowly in the water, but they can really make tracks on land. Decide whether it's best to target them from the ledge, swim past them, or

Crocs are slow swimmers, but on dry land you could be in for a real scrap.

lower the water level (when possible) and take the crocs on at their own level. You won't always have a choice, but when you do, consider your options wisely.

One of the secret rooms near the "god" chamber has a door with tricky timing, requiring Lara to make a couple of long drops.



The "god" rooms—named for Damocles, Thor, Atlas, and Neptune—present unique and thematically appropriate challenges to obstruct you from finding the keys you need. Be sure to save your game immediately before or after each room. This way, your progress will be recorded even if you don't succeed the first time!

In the Damocles room, carefully walk and tap the Up and Down buttons on the D-pad in rapid succession. This will cause the swords to fall, which you can then use to guide you. Watch those columns!

In the Thor room, the lightning seems to anticipate your moves; a zig-zag jumping strategy will minimize the hits Lara takes here.

The boulder trap in the Atlas room is tricky. Be sure to stick close to the nearest wall once you're in the pit. Or, if you're feeling really adventurous, do a roll, then run. Then make another roll into the pit, grabbing onto the ledge and letting the boulder roll over your fingertips (and harmlessly out of the way).

Swimming the pool in the Neptune room isn't too tricky, but be sure to flip the switch first (you can't leave the water without doing so). Also, get a feel for the layout of the canals before trying to accomplish too much there. It could easily prove too much for your oxygen supply if you're not careful.

After the third save beacon, you'll battle Pierre (he'll be shooting at you from below). Drop down and get rid of him and the two lions, making sure to keep moving to avoid his fire while you fire back at him.

6 The Colosseum

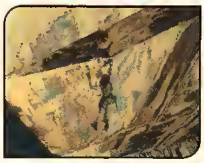
Hungry lions threaten you at every turn...Speed is crucial in avoiding the timed-door trap...Watch out for Pierre, the wicked adventurer!

The only way around the pit is via the crevice to your left. Jump, grab, and shimmy across the pit to the other side. There are pick-ups in the crevice area (lift Lara up when she reaches that point). Pick-ups can also be found in the pit, although first you must shoot the crocs and then jump down into the pit and locate the power-ups.

Once again, Pierre is hot on your trail...so shoot, move, and take cover until he's scared off.

A very tricky timing puzzle awaits you in the room at the back of the lion dens; concentrate on the order in which you execute the steps.

It's best to back Lara up to the "pressure plate" in the back of the room and jump onto the plate. Next, dash into the first room, hit the switch and spin around. Then run out of the first room and into the second room and through the inner door (staying close to the wall between the doors to minimize the distance Lara must cross). Finally, hit the switch you find there. Once you've made it through this inner door, you can take your time.

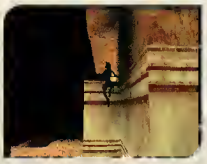


Shimmy your way across the "croc pit" and don't miss the secret clearing.

If possible, stay on higher ground to fight off the pit beasts.

This timed door puzzle is the first truly tough one you'll tackle. The trick is to do it all as efficiently as possible—waste a single second and a door will slam shut in Lara's face! Ignore the pick-ups for now; you can retrieve them after you've reached the switch.

Step on the pressure plate in the second room to open its door, then move on to the main pressure plate at the back of the room. Finally, head back to the first room to get the Medikit.



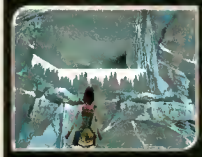
After you make this jump, draw and fire—a gorilla anxiously awaits you!

After you reach the second save beacon (and a boulder trap), you can add magnums to your arsenal...but you've got to find them first.

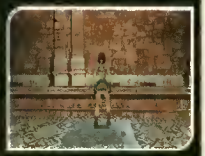
This boulder trap may surprise you—remember, where there's a slope... ▶

Buried Secrets

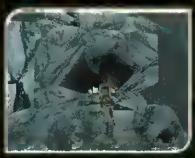
Throughout the 15 levels, there are Medikits (which are absolutely essential to replenishing Lara's health), weapons, and ammo distributed in places that are often hidden, and which become more infrequent and hard-to-find as you advance. Remember, once you reach a save beacon, you usually cannot go back and find and power-ups you may have missed. You'll know when you're near hidden "treasure" by noticing these clues:



◀ **Shifts in landscape patterns:** These are often small ledges, doorways, or clearings.



▶ **Pressure plates:** These are metallic gray in color and usually open a door or activate some other movable object that's obstructing your access.



◀ **Statues, architectural elements, other landmarks, or dark areas:** You'll sometimes find a secret near or behind these.

Telltale sounds: These can be music or sound effects.

▶ **Enemies and traps:** As you progress, secrets get harder to find and are often located in or near areas that are patrolled by beasts or are festering with treacherous traps. Once you've negotiated your way around these obstacles, start looking around for clues leading you to secret locations.

◀ **Climbing:** Where there are footholds, movable blocks, or platforms leading upward, there's a good chance that they hide secrets worth uncovering.

A Note About Power-Ups **Although you'll notice there are plenty of Medikits to go around in the earlier levels, you encounter them less and less frequently as you move through *Tomb Raider*—just as you need them more and more. Make the effort to look for these valuables and conserve them as much as possible as you move along. The same goes for ammunition. (Again, this underscores the need to fight both offensively and defensively.)**

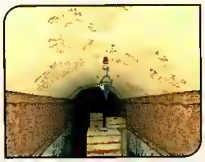
7 The Palace Midas

Deft skill combinations help you outsmart a challenging series of puzzles .. The beasts get meaner—and there are lots more of them, too.

You're looking for three lead bars which can be placed on a certain "hand," and thereby turned to gold. In the main room you'll notice four doors, each bearing a cryptic series of symbols above its frame. These are the codes to use on the switches you'll find on the large platform at the back of the room; each opens the door it appears over.

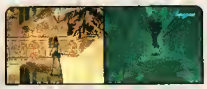
Round your first corner and a familiar face is there to greet you!

In the "water" room, you must execute a multi-leap across all the platforms before the flames re-ignite. Try to stay toward the edges to minimize damage should re-ignition occur.



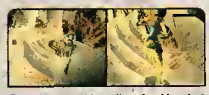
Linger here and Lara fries. If you don't hit each perfectly, start over.

In the "rock slide" room, you'll need to jump to level areas where Lara can stand without sliding, and climb to the doorway situated on the left wall.



The "avalanche" room offers plenty of scenic variety, and ample amounts of treachery at every turn. Lara will have to leap, swim, and shoot her way through a menagerie of menace.

When you find the Hand of Midas, do NOT climb onto it—doing so will cause Lara to turn to gold (and die).



One misstep and Lara dies of *gold* age!

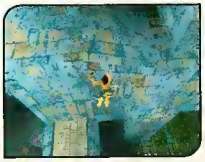
8 The Cistern

Doing everything right isn't enough; the sequence is also important .. Swim through tunnels, and change water levels .. Uh-oh, Pierre's back!

Controlling the water level is critical in finding all the keys you'll need, and you have to locate them in the right order, too. The first rusty key is easy to spot, but the second will require a little looking.

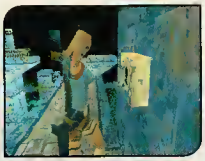
The cistern raises and lowers the room's water level, which is critical to gaining access to all the levers and doors you must find. Keep in mind where you need to go before using it.

Once you have the rusty keys, turn your attention to finding the first silver key. Then head for the cistern itself to raise the water level.

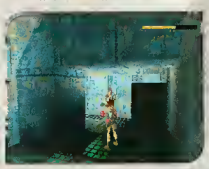


Lara gets to show off her shimmying ability when finding the first rusty key.

In the first rusty key-opened room (to the left of where you came into the room), you'll encounter Pierre once again. Get down to ground level and keep moving as you fire at him to run him off. Watch out for hidden knives!



Just beyond this door is a sudden drop to a knife trap, so tread carefully.

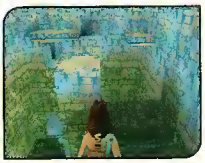


It's Pierre, the persistent adventurer who takes plenty of potshots at Lara.

9 The Tomb of Tihocan

Swim in and after powerful currents .. A pendulum trap requires a tough jump .. More puzzles to decode .. and a final bout with Pierre

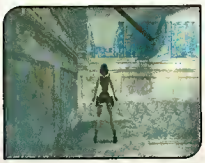
Top activities in this area: using the switches to manage the current's flow, and looking around very carefully for hidden areas.



Avoid the well-lit pillar platform—it's in the cross-fire of a nasty dart trap.

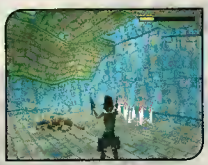
Keep checking the oxygen level, and get a good idea of where the surfaces are, for Lara will need them in order to catch her breath.

Be sure to view an overhead perspective of where Lara is in relation to the swinging blade before attempting that leap.



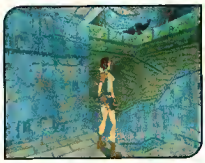
Start Lara's running leap as the blade reaches its right crest.

As soon as you're out of the water with the crocodile, Pierre will find you yet again. Ignore the croc and return Pierre's fire to run him off. Afterward, blast the croc, take the power-ups, and look for an opening that's partially concealed. This is where you need to go.

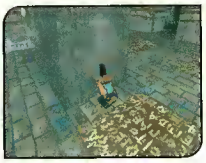


Stay away from the daggers. It doesn't take many of them to do Lara in.

You have to jump up to a platform in order to obtain the gold key. Unfortunately, two apes are on the platform, so jump, draw, and fire at them as soon as Lara has risen to her feet on the platform.



Get up there fast! Those gorillas will pound Lara as soon as she's up there.



Climb up onto the block just as soon as it's over the symbol square!

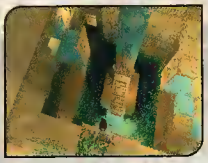
You must locate the switch (try the pool...) to open the temple door. When you reach the temple edifice itself, expect a stone statue to come to life and hurl fireballs at you. Head into the temple for immediate refuge, and shoot from the doorway, moving quickly to and fro so you can avoid his shots (side-flips are particularly effective here).

Finally, this level gives you a perfect chance to take care of pesky Pierre once and for all! Get the scion, the gold key, and magnums from Pierre.

10 The City of Kahmoon

Watch out for particularly nasty beasts, like mummies and demons .. Puzzles get harder, and the rooms are higher and tougher to reach.

You need to get the highest of the blocks over to the other side of the ditch, so use the block that's in the ditch as a bridge.



You need to lower all four bridges to obtain the artifacts necessary to leave the level.

You'll run into the first of your mummified enemies here. They can inflict serious damage, so stay on your toes while shooting, and get plenty of practice...because these enemies only get tougher as you progress through the game.

The exotic city of Khamoon is crawling with mummies and puzzles.

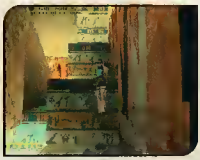
11 The Obelisk of Kahmoon

Find 4 switches to lower 4 bridges (leading you to needed artifacts). Those mummies and demons keep coming; they can do serious damage!

Past the keyhole, you'll come to four movable blocks. Move the block on the far left and dive in to find the sapphire key. You'll need it, since it opens both the door you passed and the door that's higher up, in the wall on your right.

4 bridges and 4 icons to secure—you'll need them all to exit the level.

In the mummy room, you'll find the bridges you must lower to get the four objects needed to exit this level: the Eye of Horus, the Scarab, the Seal of Anubis, and the Ankh.



It takes a switch and some climbing to get up these giant steps.

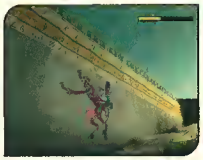
Mummies abound, so take advantage of this mayhem to sharpen those fighting skills even further.

12 Sanctuary of the Scion

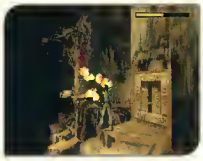
Getting the ankh keys won't be easy... Winged demons attack!... Seeing and learning where to go are as important as climbing well.

As soon as you hit the stairs, two mummies will come after you with a vengeance. Be ready for their attack!

Also, you'll encounter flying demons, who like to attack from above. The best way to kill them is to hold down the Alt button (to keep you from tumbling over an edge) and blast 'em while backing away from them. Be careful—these winged terrors can send you flying to a certain death.



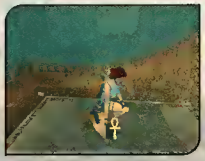
These ferocious zombies come at you immediately. Stay on your toes!



Look out for these winged demons. They'll knock Lara off her perch.

In a room high on the mountainside you'll run into your first centaur. Use the room's opening as site of your defense, and repeatedly side-hop into and out of the opening as you fire. As much as possible, stay away from the centaurs; when they explode, they can take Lara with them.

Fight this centaur by side-jumping in and out of the doorway.

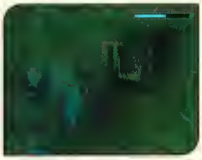


...and pick up the ankh you need on the platform. Hey, you deserve it!

To get the second ankh, you'll have to slide backwards and grab the edge as you fall. Then shimmy and climb to reach the edge (or, if you're feeling extra-confident, slide forward and jump at exactly the right moment).

Slide backwards, then grab the ledge.

To reach the invisible platform, turn right on top of the Sphinx's head and look carefully for an ammo clip that seems to be hovering in mid-air. Leap toward it and you'll land on the platform, hopefully.



Watch your air supply as you work the lever beneath the underwater sphinx.

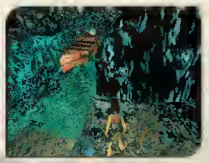
When you reach the scion chamber, Larson (your old enemy) will be waiting for you. Now's your chance to settle the score with him. When you're finished, grab the scion.

13 Natla's Mines

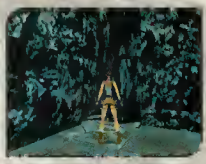
You lose your guns early on, although you can reclaim them with some work...Look before you leap; deadly lava pits are all around you.

The first switch you need to find is behind the waterfall. Get to the top of the small cabin by pulling the movable block toward it and leaping from there. Fall through the collapsible part of the roof to continue.

You're looking for three batteries you can use to lower the raised cabin you first encountered; once inside the cabin, you'll recover the pistols that were taken from Lara.



Move the boat and you'll gain access.

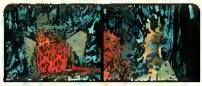


Atop the ramshackle cabin is a tricky collapsing floor Lara should fall through.

Across the pool from you is a movable-crate puzzle that's partially hidden. Go to it by using the boat as a platform to leap from once you've moved it with the switch. Once you locate the movable crates (after finding many others that you just can't budge), and consider how to best use your maneuvering space to get beyond the crates.

Which block to move? The darkened one leads to yet another block.

The boulder traps get significantly tougher starting with this level, so perfect your "trap-busting" skills here.



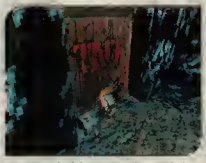
There's a boulder further up that ramp. After you make the first jump (to either side), wait for it to pass before your next jump.

After passing the third save beacon, you'll enter the bowels of the mines—and promptly run into the guy who has your magnums. Shoot him and reclaim them. Then prepare for an extremely tricky running leap-grab (all the way to the far wall bearing the switch). You'll be falling down the cliff, but you'll stop your descent by grabbing the ledge below the crevice and shimmying to the right.

Be careful here—not all these pillar surfaces are flat!

When you get to the TNT crates, pull the movable one away from the wall and into the next room. You'll use a switch to detonate this crate, which will open up a new passage for you.

Watch out for the skateboarding boss—waste him and you can take your



This TNT block is operated by a switch. Use it to create access.

Uzis back! Past him, there's a nasty triple-boulder trap waiting.

The sand-colored blocks you'll find after a climb unlock a tougher puzzle; you'll need to move one of these blocks in order to move another, and thereby expose an opening.

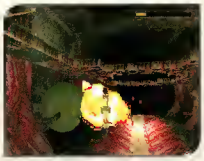
From as close a distance as you can safely manage, target the guard who has your Uzis, shooting him before you reach the pyramid face. Climb the pyramid face by leaping from one beveled area to another.

Use the switch to open the golden door; inside lays the pyramid key. You'll need this to exit the level.

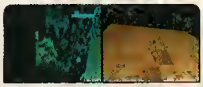
14 Atlantis

Those globes are eggs ready to hatch ferocious beasts! ..Watch for winged demons ..A perplexing puzzle awaits you and your clone.

Here's your introduction to those nasty exploding spheres. You'll need all the firepower you can muster for the monsters that emerge from them. In this level, whatever you do, keep moving! The spheres will explode eventually but you can speed things along by approaching them while their "arms" are moving.



Atlantis starts with a major firefight and never lets up.

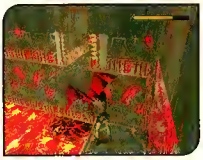


Just what Lara needed—a timed-door-boulder-dagger-pit-trap puzzle (whew!). Trigger the boulders, then start over to reach the door before it closes.

In the high-ceilinged room you enter next, take a running leap at the next platform, but be ready to stop on a dime because a steel-jawed trap is waiting for you.

Do a leap-grab to reach the crevice beyond the "wrought iron" floor. Grab the power-ups, jump back, then do a leap-grab from the edge of the floor to the next platform.

Be careful...a demon bat will emerge from the sphere, trying to knock you into the lava below. Aggressive demons await you around



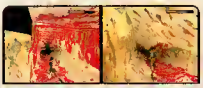
There's not much room to operate from here, so nail this demon pronto.

several turns, so stay cool (and armed to the teeth).

There's a boulder trap/puzzle for you to solve. Move the block to halt the path of the boulder, so that the doorway remains clear for your safe passage. Later, you'll have to contend with a boulder/steel-jawed/darts trap. Avoid the first dart "gun" at all costs, for it's the lethal one. And instead of heading straight toward the boulder, run to the side of the ramp. Then lift yourself up and over, jumping over the ramp as soon as Lara is back on her feet again (just before the approaching boulder nails her).

The winged demons only get deadlier as you go along. Backpedal as you fire.

You'll find a trap-door puzzle. Use the switch on the left only, and jump back immediately. Then turn around, step back and grab, and then let Lara fall and perform a back flip (by pressing backward on the D-pad and ◉ button simultaneously). This should get her past the knife trap.

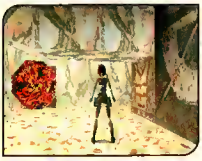


Run up and down this hallway to keep the zombies from attacking head-on.

The next room will present you with what is perhaps the single toughest fire-fight you'll face in the entire game. With little protective cover, you must defeat a particularly aggressive centaur, followed by two demons who come at you from the high-mounted spheres. After defeating the demons and saving your game at the beacon, slide down tot the "clone" area.

Important: Do NOT shoot the clone; it precisely mirrors Lara's actions.

Make your way to the switch, open the lava pit trap-door, and then run to the opposite side (be quick about it—the



Move that block into the boulder's path and you'll find your way out of here.

door's connected to a timer). Now simply make your way to the exact spot on the opposite side that mirrors the pit's location on the side Lara just left. The clone will fall into the pit, and Lara can then move on.

After dealing with a centaur and a mummy, you'll face a challenging time-puzzle/trap. The key here is to start off by using the switch on the right side to open the door. Then run around to the left side, hit that switch (to lower the bridge). And finally, run back and onto the bridge, diving to get inside before the door closes. If you stop at any point during your running, you must restart the whole process. This is because if you get caught on the bridge after the door closes, Lara will perish in the lava pit below. It's a good idea to try a test run on the pathways before playing for keeps.

Once you're inside the door, grab the Uzi clips that are in the rotating machine and get ready for the awesome finale.

15 The Great Pyramid

Trap after trap, and a really tough boss...End the game battling Natla herself!... Impossibly long falls, boulder/pendulum traps, and more!

In the final level, you'll combine and apply all the skills you've developed through the first 14 levels. You'll need every bit of this experience to help you get through a baffling series of puzzles, traps, and challenges. For starters, you'll have to defeat the rough 'n' tough "torso monster" boss on the elevated platform. Best strategy: keep running around the monster in short, straight paths and change directions

As soon as you start the final level, you're staring trouble in the eyes.

You won't believe how much ground this boss can cover. Keep moving!

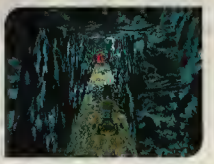
quickly and often. Shoot all the while, and watch those edges. Don't be too surprised if you die a few times before getting the hang of it.

Move the blocks until you can reach the switch, then make your way to the banked wooden platforms. Leap from one darkened (and flatter) section to another, avoiding the lava projectiles as best you can. Once

After you've made your fourth platform jump, look back and you'll see a timed bridge to a secret area. If you're low on health and need a power-up, you're in luck. Try to jump your way back to it, but be quick about it

you've leaped to the next-to-last platform (before the one adjoining the doorway), look back and you'll see that a secret bridge has lowered where you initially stood. If you are short of Medi-kits or ammo, it's important that you try to make this bridge—it leads to just what you need. The best way to do this is to do a running jump to the next leveled platform on the same side you're on, then leap to the very first platform you leaped onto in the series (on the opposite side), then do a leap-grab for the bridge. This is a timed bridge, so execute the move quickly!

When you reach the opening above the wooden platforms, you'll immediately face a boulder trap (the first of two). Handle the first as you have previously, but the second trap will require a special strategy. You need to run approximately halfway up to trigger the boulder, and Lara cannot outrun it. Try backing up the hill, keeping your ears tuned for the sound



Double boulder traps don't come any tougher than these.

of a rolling boulder. The moment you hear it, run down the hill and dive for the opening. Past the second trap, grab the ledge as you fall through the collapsing platform.

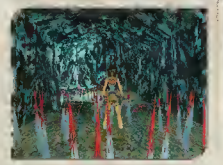
Shoot the scion in its display platform as soon as you arrive; this will cause the whole structure to lurch in response to the tremors. You'll have to contend with the effects of all this shaking in the next room.

Blast the first two demons while still on the bridge, jumping frequently to avoid fireballs and firing as constantly as possible. Another demon will emerge on the other side of the bridge. Drop down to the bluish, crystalline surface on the right side of the bridge and search for a small opening. Back Lara to the edge (using the R1 button to keep her from falling) and step back, grabbing the ledge with the ⊗ button. Do a running leap-grab to the crevice opposite your position, then begin shimmying across.

It's not just the lava below; Lara has to get past darts here, too.

The darts are difficult to time and almost impossible to avoid. Position Lara next to where the darts are hitting, then start shimmying when you see a dart enter the bottom of the screen. There are four more dart guns to shimmy past, so keep a Medikit handy to compensate for the energy Lara will lose. When you're at the end of the crevice, let Lara drop. As she slides down the inclined platform, back-flip over to the ground across from you, then immediately perform another back-flip to avoid the final dart trap.

Enter the next room and keep to the right, as you walk all the way down to the trench (this will trigger a boulder trap to Lara's immediate left). Then walk part of the way back up the hill and back toward the pendulum blade. Be very careful here! Using your



It's even more dangerous than it looks. Navigate with care!

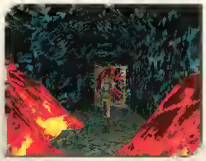
overhead camera view, position Lara at the precise point where she is approximately one body-width away from the blade. Then time the jump in relation to the highest point of the blade's swing to the right. Stop immediately after the jump, or she'll be impaled on the knives.

Next, carefully walk Lara to the middle clearing between the knife traps. Give her plenty of clearance around the knives she's facing, then jump over that trap, and immediately jump again...this time over the next knife trap.

To reach the power-ups on the slope beyond the sloped platforms, you must execute a perfect jump-grab as you slide down the first platform. If you can't make that, don't worry about it—there are easier opportunities just ahead.

When you arrive at the last sloped platform, save your game, then either leap over to the clearing near the boulder ramp or leap and grab the crevice and then shimmy over to the boulder ramp.

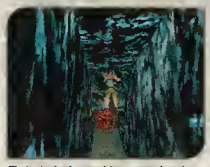
The key to navigating the boulder/pendulum-blade trap is timing your approach precisely. Start running when the blade is at its lowest point. Then make a sharp right just before the boulder arrives. Your smooth footwork will carry you to a



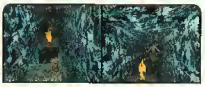
The twin lava traps are activated when Lara crosses an invisible line. RUN!

clearing just beyond the blade. You'll see a boulder to your immediate right; run down the hill and head right, letting that boulder roll until it comes to rest behind you. Then jump over the boulder and grab the Medikit.

The next boulder trap is even trickier. Start running when the blade is at its lowest point. You'll slide down the



Timing's the key to this over-and-under double boulder trap. Run under the first, then leap-grab across and let the second pass overhead.



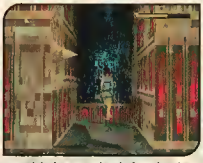
Stay to the edges of these flaming platforms to minimize Lara's damage. She can pause on the longer middle one.

Incline, with the boulder hot on your heels. Time your jump just before the pit.

Next comes the lava trap. Be sure not to walk too far before lining up your approach, or the lava will roll out and you'll find yourself stuck and/or dead. You need to run past the first two flows (to where the Medikit is laying). Then stop, take a side step again (being careful not to step too far ahead) and run for the switch and door.

It's a long way down, and much easier via the platform trap just ahead...

...so leap-grab to the edge, time Lara's climb with the pendulum...



...and dash across the platform, leaping at the edge to safety (and power-ups!).

The next double-boulder trap requires that you run until Lara is a few steps before the pit, then slow her pace to a stop so she doesn't fall in. Then, execute a leap-grab to the pit edge opposite your position and let the boulder roll over Lara's fingers. You can then raise her up and enter the next flaming series jump. Again, stay on the edges to avoid too much contact with the flames.

The next dive to a pool far below is extremely difficult to estimate. It's best to leap-grab to the edge of the collapsible platform (it will remain stable until Lara climbs onto it), then time Lara's climb-and-run move across the platform, jumping when she reaches the edge and grabbing the edge of the opening just across from you. Pull yourself in and grab the power-ups, then position Lara at the edge of the opening and step off. The fall is frighteningly long, but will send Lara straight into the pool.

Swim to the next save beacon, and say your prayers as you get ready for the last boss, Natla, who turns out to be a winged demon herself. Battle her as you have the other demons, but never write her off too early—she's even dangerous when she's dead! After you've disposed of Natla, it's simply a matter of leaping from pillar to pillar until you reach the final tunnel.

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unlimited access

Our motto at *station*: "If at first you don't succeed—use a code." We've assembled a fantastic batch of hints, tips, and codes to help you travel farther, collect more, and generally play better. This info should keep you busy for a good while, or at least until our next issue. Enjoy with our compliments, and remember that if you stumble across any hints, tips, or codes, please share them with us. Send them to the following address:

Unlimited Access
c/o station
5137Clareton Drive Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

COOL BOARDERS

To changa tha DJ's voica
Choose Option mode, then push SELECT **55** times.

CONTRA: LEGACY OF WAR

(Enter all four of these codes while at the title screen)

1-**Movia Selact screen**
(see all of the FMV clips)
Press L2 L1 R1 R2 ▲◀▼▶

2-**Bamboo Arcade Game**
Press R2 R1 ▶◀ L1 L2

3-**Second Bamboo Arcada Gama**
(exactly like *Gyruss*)
L2 L1 ◀▶ R1 R2

4-**Special Effects**
(74 of them in all)
Press L2 R1 L1 L2 ▲▶▼◀

DISRUPTOR

To enter the following codes, press SELECT during gameplay then press L1 *to shut off real-time play.*

For Full Health:
△ ✕ ✕ ○ ✕ △ □ □

To get Full Ammo:
✕ □ △ △ ✕ ○ △ ✕

WWF IN YOUR HOUSE

Pause the game to use the following codes:

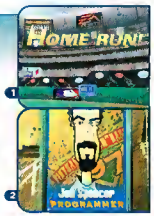
To turn off computer players:
◀◀▲▼ R2

To inflict greater damage:
▲▲ L1 L2 ▼

To keep Combo Moves permanently available:
R1 L2 R2 L2 ▶

To usa Superpins:
▼▼▼ L1

TRIPLE PLAY '97



1-**To hit Homa Runs whila playing a game or in the Home Run Derby:**
While playing, keep L1 L2 R1 R2 pressed down then quickly press ▲▲ ○ ○ ▲▲ ✕ ✕. If done correctly you should hear a chime.

2-**Entar any of tha development team members for super players.**

TOMB RAIDER

To possess all weapons:
Pause the game, go to the Inventory screen and press L1 △ R2 L2 L2 R2 ○ and L1

TEKKEN 2

1,2-To play as Roger and Alex:
Defeat the third character when you have barely any life left [1]. Your next match will be against Roger and Alex [2] and if defeated by them, you should then be able to play as them.

To use the following codes you must have access to every character:

To change Kazuya's wardrobe:
Select Kazuya with the Start button and his suit will now be purple.

To view the game from a first-person perspective:
While selecting your character press L1 and L2 at the same time. This will enable you to see using a first person perspective.

To enlarge your players' heads:
While selecting your character, press Select. Your players will now have enlarged heads.

To make your head even bigger:
Press Select again when choosing a player.

STAR GLADIATOR

1-If you want to be Bilstein:
In Arcade mode, hold down Select and choose Gore. Press ⊗ ◉ ⊗ ◉ ◉ ◉ ◉ △ ◉ and △. Then hit ⊗ and ◉ simultaneously.

2-To access Kappah:
In Arcade mode, go to Gore, press Select then go to Hayato. Next press ◉ ◉ △ ◉ ⊗ ◉ △ ◉ ◉ and ◉. Then hit ⊗ and △ simultaneously.

3-To become Blood:
In Arcade mode, press Select (and keep it held down), and go to Bilstein. Press ⊗ ◉ ⊗ ◉ ⊗ ◉. Then go to Kappah and press ◉ △ ◉ △ ◉ and △. Then press L1 + R1 and let go of the Select button.

To play against a dark screen:
Choose your character and hold ▼ (on the D-pad) + L2 + R1 until the match starts.

4-To give your character an enlarged head:
Choose your character and press ▶ Start ◉ and ◉. Hold down these buttons until the round starts.

5-To shrink your character's head:
Choose your character and hold down ◀ Start ◉ and ◉ until the round starts.

BEYOND THE BEYOND

Hint: Equip yourself with magical rings, then sell them. You'll be 7,500 gps richer and you'll get to keep the ring, too.

WIPEOUT XL

From anywhere in the menu sequence, press L1 + R1 + Select at the same time, and hold down all three while you enter the following codes:

1-To drive a "Piranha" ship
(the fastest racer):
⊗ ⊗ ⊗ ◉ △ and ◉

2-To drive in the Phantom Class
(the fastest classification):
△ △ △ ◉ ◉ and ◉

To race all tracks on the easy difficulty level:
◉ ◉ △ ◉ and ◉

3-To get the following, first pause the game and press L1 + R1 + Select. Then input the following codes:
Unlimited Energy = △ ⊗ ◉ ◉ △ ⊗ ◉ and ◉
Unlimited Weapons = ⊗ ⊗ ◉ ◉ ◉ and △
Unlimited Time = △ ◉ ◉ ⊗ △ ◉ ◉ and ⊗

WIPEOUT

1-To drive on a secret "Firestar" track:
On the screen that reads "Select Number of Players," pick one player and hold R1 L1 ▶ Start ◉ and ◉ and then press ⊗. When you arrive at the "Select Racing Circuit" screen in the Single Race or Time Trial mode, you'll be able to drive the "Firestar" track.

2-To drive in the Rapier Class
(without qualifying for it):
On the "Select Number of Players" screen hold R2 L2 ◀ Start and Select, and then press ⊗.

TWISTED METAL 2

1-To drive the Minion "death wagon":
Press L1 ▲▼ and ◀ at the Car Select screen.

2-To drive the Sweet Tooth ice cream truck:
Press ▲ L1 △ and ▶ at the Car Select screen.

Here are the button sequences for some Advanced Attacks:
Freeze Blast = ◀▶▲
Napalm = ▶◀▲
Car Jump = ▲▲◀
Shield = ▲▲▶
Rear Attack = ◀▶▼
Mine Attack = ▶◀▼
Cloaking Device = ▶▼◀▲

TOBAL NO.1

To view the fighting from a different camera perspective:
At the Character Selection screen, press and hold L2 & R2 until the game starts

JET MOTO

First unlock all the tracks by winning a full season at the Professional level.
"Codes Enabled" will then appear. Now you can enter any of the following codes:

To make the tracks as slippery as ice:
▲ R2 R1 ▶ L1 ● ▶ and ▶

To keep turbo power all the time:
△ ▲ ▲ L2 L1 ▲ ▲ and ▲

To receive double stunt points:
▶ ▲ ● L2 ✕ ● R1 and R2

To become super agile:
▼ ● ◀ L1 ◀ ▶ ◀ and ▶

MACHINE HEAD

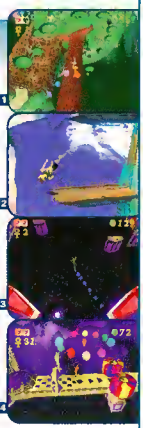
Input these codes while at the Main menu...

1 **To receive unlimited ammo:**
● ● ● ● L1 ● L1 L1 ● L1 ● L1
L1 ● L1 ● L1 L1 L1 and L1

2 **To receive unlimited energy:**
● L1 L1 L1 ● L1 ● ● L1 ● ● ●
L1 L1 L1 L1 L1 ● ● and L1

To select levels:
L1 ● L1 L1 L1 ● ● ● ● L1 L1
● ● L1 ● L1 ● ● ● and ●

PANDEMONIUM!



Try the following passwords:

To select your level:
ALMABHOL

1 **To rotate the screen:**
Twisteye (then when you're playing, hold L1 + L2 and press ◀ or ▶ on the D pad)

2 **To get a deformed body:**
Thething (then when you're playing, hold L2 and press ●)

Invincibility:
Hardbody

To swap characters in mid-game:
Bodyswap (then when you're playing, press △)

To get 31 lives:
Vitamins

To get extra hearts:
Coronary

To access any hearts:
Bornfree

3 **To get to a pinball game screen after completing a level:**
Tommyboy

4 **To get to a bonus screen after completing a level:**
Cashdash

To keep all of your weapons permanently:
Ottofire

MADDEN 97

1,2 To play with secret teams:
Enter Tiburon (the name of the game's programming house) at the User Records screen. Go back to the Team Selection screen and you will be able to choose the following secret teams:

AFC Pro Bowlers
NFC Pro Bowlers
All Madden All-Time Team
All 50s 60s Team
All 80s Team
EA Sports
Tiburon

To view all the FMVs:
Keep the L1 and R1 pressed when you start the game. After the Sony logo disappears you should get access to all the cinematic sequences.

BASES LOADED '96

To hit home runs the easy way:
Pause the game and use the second controller to enter △ ■ ✕ ● ● and ●. (If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a piano-like sound.) Then press L1 on the second controller until you hear the announcer say "Home Run." All your players will then hit home runs as long as you make contact with the ball.

To let the computer control your team for you:
Pause the game and on the second controller press △ ■ ✕ ● ● and ●. You should hear a noise confirming your code. Then press L2 on the second controller, after which you should hear a beeping noise.

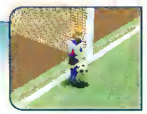
DIE HARD TRILOGY

Hint: When you start the second game, shoot the helicopter. You'll receive a Berreta with unlimited ammo.

SLAM 'N' JAM '96

To give big heads to all your players:
When the second screen for the scouting report is shown, choose "Continue" and press Start. As the screen is disappearing, tap the L1 button quickly and keep repeating this until the tip-off. After the tip-off, pause the game then unpause it. You will now have big- headed players.

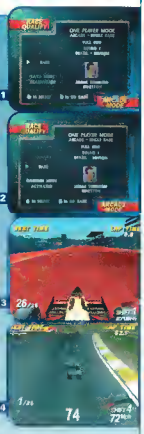
GOAL STORM



To give your players giant heads of stone:
As soon as "Press Start" appears, press ▲ ▲ ▼ ▼ ◀ ▶ ◀ ▶ ● and ●. You'll know you entered the code correctly if you hear a crowd roar.

FORMULA 1

Before you can key in any of these codes, you've got to access the Race Qualifying screen first. [1] When entering a code, make sure you hit the buttons as quickly as possible. (Try using different codes together for even more fun.)



To race on a bonus track:
After going to the Race Qualifying screen, press Select and then press ◀ ◉ ◉ △ △ ◉ ▲ and ▶.

To change your racer into a bike:
Keep the Select button pressed, and hit the following buttons: ▼ ▲ ◉ △ ▶ ▲ ◉ and ◉. After this sequence, you should see the message reading "Bike Mode Activated," meaning your car is being transformed into a bicycle.

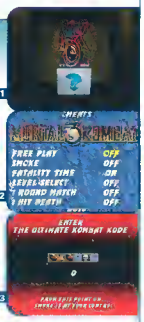
2-To activate a "Gibberish" mode:
(First, make sure you've selected "Commentary" from the sound options.) Hold down the Select button and tap ◀ ◉ ▲ ▼ ▼ ▶ ◉ ◉ and ◉. After you see "Gibberish Mode Activated," Murray Walker (the game's racing commentator) will speak total nonsense. (Once again, remember to choose "Commentary" from the sound options.)

To make the commentator speak nothing but German:
(First, make sure you've selected "Commentary" from the sound options.) Hold down the Select button and quickly press the following buttons: ▼ ▲ ◀ ◀ ◉ ◉ and ⊗. Now you should see the message: "German Mode Activated." (Remember: choose "Commentary" from the sound options.)

3-To race on a fiery track:
At the Main Menu screen, press ◉, ◉, ▲, ▶, ▶, ◉, and ⊗.

4-If you want to drive a dune buggy:
Hold down the Select button and rapidly tap ▶ ▲ △ ◀ ▲ ◉ and △. You'll see the message "Buggy Mode Activated," letting you know you're ready to ride.

MORTAL KOMBAT 3



1,2-To find hidden tips:
During the demo press ⊗ ◉ △ R1 R1 R2 R2 R1 and R1. You will then hear "You'll Never Win." When the Kombat appears in red, press the ▲ arrow to get to a secret cheats menu.

3-To play as Smoke:
Rotate the pad 360 degrees after the copyright screen appears and you should see the "Ultimate Kombat Kode" prompt. Press R1 △ six times ⊗ six times and ◉ nine times. You will hear a voice say "Outstanding," provided you've entered the code correctly.

NCAA GAME BREAKERS

To access the secret password screen:
Highlight Options from the Main menu screen and press L1 R1 L2 and R2. Be sure to use the appropriate uppercase and lowercase letters when you enter the following passwords:

Additional snow Blizzard	**Easier to catch** Hands
Windier wind Tornado	**Computer team slower** Slow CPU
Always healthy Healthy	**Throw farther** Cannon
Kick farther Big Foot	**Kick shorter** Little Foot
Weaker blocks Blocking ▼	**Stronger blocks** Blocking ▲
Smaller players Midgets	**Bigger players** Giants
Frequent fumbles Fumbles	**Frequent Interceptions** Interceptions
Harder hits Rock Em	
All Star Teams:	
OSU All Stars	Mich All Stars
ND All Stars	Neb All Stars
USC All Stars	EMU All Stars

V-TENNIS

1-To play as Mattox:
Go to the character select screen and pick a character. Then press L2 L2 R1 R2 R1 ▼ △ △ △ △ and ⊗. You should hear a sound confirming your code.

2-To play as Aversa:
Go to the Character Select screen and pick a character. Then hold L1 R2 ▲ and ◉ and then press ⊗. You should hear a sound confirming your code.

DOOM

Press pause during the game, then press the following buttons:

1-X-ray:
L1 R2 L2 R1 ▶ △ ⊗ ▶

Invincibility:
▼ L2 ◉ R1 ▶ L1 ◀ ◉

2-All Goodies:
⊗ △ L1 ▲ ▲ R2 ◀ ◀

Complete Map:
Triangle, Triangle, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, Square
△ △ L2 R2 L2 R2 R1 ◉

3-Level Warp:
▶ ◀ R1 R1 △ L1 ◉ ⊗

All Items on Map:
△ △ L2 R2 L2 R2 R1 ◉

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Dean Malenko

Eddy Guerrero

Ric Flair

Chris Benoit

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PlayStation

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station sports link

Welcome to *station.sportslink*. Get ready to tap into the latest PlayStation sports news, reviews, and previews. During our premiere broadcast we'll compare the latest titles from the worlds of hockey, football, and baseball. We'll also put two hot new racing games through their paces, and check out a new PlayStation golf game. First, though, let's take a quick look at the publishers bringing you these new games.

THE PLAYERS

After an unexpected rebuilding year, EA Sports is back with a huge presence. The company may not dominate the sports arena as it once did, but it has designed the PlayStation's best all-around sports title yet with *Madden '97* (which takes on all competitors in our football head-to-head competition). Virgin Interactive is one of those publishers biting at EA's heels, and that company is exploding onto the hockey scene with *NHL Powerplay '96*, already stealing some thunder from EA's long-awaited *NHL '97*. In other sports game news, it's looking like a slow year for baseball titles—none of which really stand apart from a mediocre pack. Racing games, on the other hand, are picking up speed: both *Formula 1* and *Andretti Racing* placed on *station*'s 50 All-Time Best List, found in this issue (read on for our reviews).

That's a quick rundown on the overall PlayStation sports scene, and now it's time for sizzling game-to-game competition. Our skates are laced-up and the ice is calling, so let the games begin...

NHL® POWERPLAY™ '96

Brace yourself, hockey fans. The PlayStation's champion hockey sim has arrived, and it comes from a newcomer to the sport. Virgin and Radical Entertainment have joined forces to create the smoothest playing and most realistically animated console version of ice hockey to date. *NHL Powerplay '96* has no breathtaking intro sequence or video clips between contests, but once the gameplay kicks in you won't mind the sacrifice—and gameplay, after all, is the essence of a good hockey sim. Basically, if you only want one hockey game for your PlayStation, this is the one to look for.

PRESENTATION

An overhead perspective offers a superb (yet distant) view of the action, while a 360° instant replay feature lets you take a closer look at the polygon-based skaters and their dazzling 3D playing surface, viewable from practically any angle. The players' motions and reactions capture reality perfectly, with players dropping to their knees to block shots, goalies raising arms to indicate icing calls, and puck carriers being knocked slightly off-balance by defenders.

9.5

CONTROL

Gameplay moves along at a crisp pace and tight controls make it easy to keep up with the action. Each team carries four forward lines and three defensive pairings—just as in the NHL—and *Powerplay '96* wisely lets you change the forward and defensive units independently of each other.

9.5

EXTRAS

Aside from the typical modes of play there is a world tournament and a selection of 16 international teams, with NHL stars playing for their respective homelands. The absence of fights and player trades are two glaring omissions, but stat tracking, the ability to adjust coaching strategies, and the ESPN license put the icing on the cake...and help make *NHL Powerplay '96* a definite winner.

8.5

sports link — SIGNAL STRENGTH

overall 9.1

NHL® 97

EA Sports' *NHL Hockey* series debuts on the PlayStation with the widely anticipated *NHL 97*, bringing textured polygon skaters to the ice (not to mention EA Sports' proven track record). The game's power lies in its presentation, with a stellar opening cinematic sequence, pre-game hosting by Fox's James Brown, and attractive TV-style graphic overlays that appear during the action. While not the best PlayStation hockey title, *NHL 97* delivers—both for fans of the series and gamers in general.

PRESENTATION

Hockey authority John Davidson calls goals and penalties and offers analysis during intermission. (A few of his spoken clips are repeated *way* too often.) There are nine camera angles from which to choose, including an interesting—yet impractical—"helmet cam" perspective that allows you to see the action through the eyes of any player. Even the game's menus are sharp and well-designed.

9.5

CONTROL

Mastering player control (which is based largely on skater momentum) takes practice, but drop passes, spin-o-ramas, and shot-blocking dives are all available. On the ice, the polygon skaters appear quite blocky, but this is offset by motion-capture technology which gives them authentic animation.

8.5

EXTRAS

The game boasts such extras as visible names and numbers on jerseys, signature moves for 15 of the league's top stars, the ability to trade and create players, and occasional fighting (thrown in for the sake of realism). Game modes include Exhibition, Season, Playoff, and Shootout options. Up to 8 players can take the ice simultaneously in *NHL 97*, ensuring plenty of replay value.

9.5

sports link — SIGNAL STRENGTH

overall 8.9

NHL® FACE OFF '97™

Face Off '97's replay value is strengthened by a multi-user season feature. This allows a number of gamers to choose their favorite teams and follow them through the same season, which sets the stage for some intense competition. Still, it's the innovative new features that steal the show. While *Face Off '97* isn't on par with the likes of *NHL Power Play '96* (or even *NHL 97*), it is certainly a fun and well-designed title that deserves any hockey fan's attention. Simply put, "third-best" genre games don't get much better than this consistently solid entry.

Not all 32-bit games need polygon-modeling to be worth playing. Sony's *NHL Face Off '97* is a perfect example. Detailed player sprites and quick, responsive gameplay provide a solid foundation for this follow-up to last year's *NHL Face Off*.

8.0

Simple yet extensive controls put most hockey maneuvers at your fingertips, from fake slapshots to backward-skating hip checks. And now there's also icon passing—a long-time staple of football sims. Hold down the L2 button while you control the puck and icons for each different gamepad button will appear beneath each teammate. Pressing the appropriate button will send a pass to the player of your choice, with one-timers and give-and-go's possible.

8.5

The game receives added depth from extras like extensive statistics tracking, adjustable team strategies, and player trade/create options. These additions help offset arcade-ish oddities such as a larger-than-life puck that often reacts unrealistically, and injuries that occur much too frequently.

9.0

sports link

overall **8.5**

hockey head-to-head

NHL Powerplay '96 is light on bells-and-whistles (except for multiple camera angles accessible through an instant replay feature that gives you a 360° perspective) but its gameplay sizzles.

Unreal! The opening to *NHL 97* shows how various pro franchises might have teamed up with their mascots. An upward-flying shark crashes through ice, then ascends until it finds a helmet home.

The puck in *NHL Face Off '97* is occasionally too large, but the game benefits from icon passing (in which you're able to see the names of all potential pass receivers). There's also a wealth of statistics.

MADDEN 97

Yes, it was indeed worth the wait. The *Madden* series, originally slated to make its PlayStation debut last year, finally arrived on the Sony console this fall. Graphically, *Madden 97* is still sprite-based, but motion capture technology lends realistic movement to the players on each of the 100-plus teams (the disc includes current, all-time great, and even "secret" teams). Sports anchor James Brown emcees the action from the studio, while the dynamic duo of Pat Summerall and John Madden complement the on-field performance with some of the best videogame commentary ever.

PRESENTATION	The overall presentation is *incredible*, mirroring the Sunday afternoon TV football experience like no other game. The game's appearance is enhanced by the choice of eight camera angles and the inclusion of all 30 NFL stadiums, each rendered in 3D.	10
CONTROL	The gameplay is relatively simple yet extremely addictive (like the other games in this hallmark series). *Madden 97*'s superb controls enable you to make leaping interceptions, crunching collisions, and precision passes, to as many as six active receivers.	9.5
EXTRAS	Other features: over 500 plays, the ability to create and trade players, and three modes of play (exhibition, season, and tournament).	8.5

sports link — SIGNAL STRENGTH — overall 9.4

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 97

The *Quarterback Club* series hit the scene a few years ago and really gave *Madden* a run for its money on 16-bit systems. Now Acclaim is throwing down the 32-bit gauntlet against *Madden 97*, but the challenger runs into problems. *NFL Quarterback Club '97* gets off to a promising start with a dramatic rendered introduction. Once on the field, however, the graphics take a turn for the worse as the players become blocky and pixelated. To its credit, player numbers are visible on jerseys and motion capture technology provides players with realistic animations, such as forearm shivers, stiff-arms, and shoestring tackles.

PRESENTATION	The game features a unique "power shuck" mode: Ball carriers can drag tacklers for extra yardage and possibly even break free. The ability to taunt opponents, while unsportsmanlike, also adds humor and color. There are only four stadiums to *Madden 97's* 30, but each is a 3D representation of an actual structure. The sound effects are well done, from the press box commentary to the "trash-talking" players, but the absence of an announcer leaves a void in the game.	7.5
CONTROL	For the most part, the controls aren't as intuitive as *Madden 97*, although with practice they feel nearly as responsive. Play-calling requires wading through a bunch of menus and this prevents *NFL Quarterback Club '97* from establishing the exciting pace that can hook you on the game. (Calling plays is easy for the defense, due to a "smart D" option that automatically picks an appropriate defense, should you not want to choose your own formation.)	9.0
EXTRAS	The usual game modes are included, as well as a "quickplay" feature that jumpstarts the action with two randomly selected teams, and a "Simulations" section that challenges you to work your way out of 50 historic jams from NFL history. Even with room for eight to play (using multitaps) and a variety of camera and replay angles, *QB Club '97* just doesn't put together a package capable of overpowering *Madden 97*.	9.0

sports link — SIGNAL STRENGTH — overall 8.3

NFL GameDay '97

By releasing *NFL GameDay* in the first generation of PlayStation titles, Sony got the jump on EA Sports and its beloved *Madden* series (which only made the 32-bit transition this season). But Sony knew it wouldn't always be quite as easy to corner the 32-bit gridiron market, so the brains behind *NFL GameDay '97* were put to work, intent on building a *Madden*-killer. While the sequel they came up with may not eclipse the efforts of the hugely popular game it calls its enemy, *NFL GameDay '97* combines crisp graphics, improved artificial intelligence, and a lot of nifty extras to earn its tie for the lead.

The game's presentation isn't as polished as *Madden*, but it's still a good time; a fantastic stadium announcer calls the action while crowd chants and cheerleaders keep the atmosphere vibrant.

8.5

In addition to the typical controller commands, the L2 button can be used in conjunction with "advanced control" commands that let you diva over piles, make one-handed pass deflections, and use a system of "total control passing" to let you lead or underthrow receivers. Game controls are reasonably responsive, but if they're not to your liking, you can easily toggle to a looser or tighter setting.

10

The features you'd expect are here: NFL teams and stadiums, the option to trade and create players, page after page of statistics, and a thick book of offensive and defensive plays. *NFL GameDay '97* also offers a draft option which re-disperses the league's top 180 players over six rounds of picks. Up to eight can play with a multi-tap, and even though there are only two modes of play (Pre-Season and Season), the action is addictive and challenging.

9.5

sports link

overall **9.4**

Tecmo Super Bowl

Technically, yes—*Tecmo Super Bowl* for PlayStation does bring the popular football series to the 32-bit arena. The game, however, looks more like a 16-bit product, and therefore has a difficult time comparing to the slick looks of other current football video games. Basically, if you've played any of the previous Tecmo games, you know exactly what to expect. There's really not enough of a solid game foundation to start with...and little to keep you interested for long. Unless you're a die-hard Tecmo football fan (and we know you're out there), you'd be better off passing on this one.

Simple arcade-style gameplay has long been Tecmo's bread and butter, but the years have brought precious few innovations to Tecmo's football mainstay. The player sprites are small, causing the action to be difficult to follow when several players are in a cluster. Fortunately, you have the option of changing the camera angle from the standard (yet impractical) horizontal field orientation.

3.0

Gameplay is simple, with most actions being controlled by the X button. The only offensive action requiring the use of any other button is when you choose a pass receiver. For this you must awkwardly cycle through your receivers. On defense, you can select the defender you wish to control prior to the snap, but once the play begins you can't switch over to another player.

4.0

The playbooks contain more selections than ever before and a hefty collection of stats are maintained during each game. An announcer calls the action but in time becomes a bit annoying, as do to the inferior sound effects. Play modes include Pre-Season, Season, Pro Bowl, and Tournament (the latter allows eight players to each pick a team and do battle in tournament fashion). A team data feature allows for easy trades and skill alterations.

7.0

sports link

overall **4.6**

MLB PENNANT RACE™

While top-notch PlayStation games have surfaced recently for football, basketball, and hockey, the same can't be said for this year's crop of baseball titles. For you fanatics who just can't wait to get your mitts on a new video game version of the National Pastime, *MLB Pennant Race* is definitely your best bet. The standard features that make it into most baseball games are also included in *MLB Pennant Race*, such as the official Major League Baseball insignia and 1995 player stats. There are 4 batting and 3 fielding views available and additional control features for headfirst slides, defensive shifts, and bursts of speed.

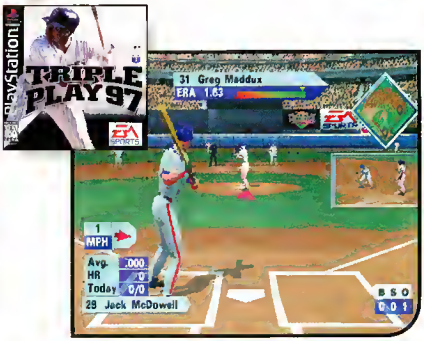
PRESENTATION — With crisp graphics, a spirited Vin Scully-style announcer, and user-friendly controls, this game brings forth entertaining gameplay...generally. The game's most unique (and unrealistic) option is the ability to switch to any other of the 28 accurately recreated major league ballparks at anytime during a game. **9.0**

CONTROL — Batters choose from contact, normal, and power batting styles for each swing. The game's biggest drawback is its method of pitch selection. You first choose one of three pitch types, and then pick its speed (slow, medium, or fast). Finally, you aim the pitch in or around the strike zone with a baseball icon. This final step gives a human opponent a fairly good idea where the pitch is heading, perhaps *too* good an idea. **7.5**

EXTRAS — Subtle annoyances hurt the game, like slower play due to the aforementioned pitch selection process and the fact that player substitutions require wading through a series of menus (then batters aren't even identified as right- or left-handed, which is a key distinction). *MLB Pennant Race* certainly has some room for plenty of improvement. **8.0**

sports link — SIGNAL STRENGTH — **overall 8.3**

TRIPLE PLAY 97



Triple Play 97 from EA Sports embodies the blandness of this season's baseball games. Despite official team licensing, detailed controls, and a truckload full of options, the game as a whole never really catches fire and engages us fully. Worse still, there are oddities in the way your team members play. For example, players haven't been programmed to cover their respective bases every time they should. When a ground ball is hit to the first baseman, the pitcher doesn't move to cover the bag, but forces the fielder to outrace the runner.

PRESENTATION — *Triple Play 97* looks good, at least at first glance, with unique menus and incredible fly-in sequences for each of the 28 major league ballparks, which are depicted accurately. In contrast, the game's fielders lack both detail and smooth animation. **7.0**

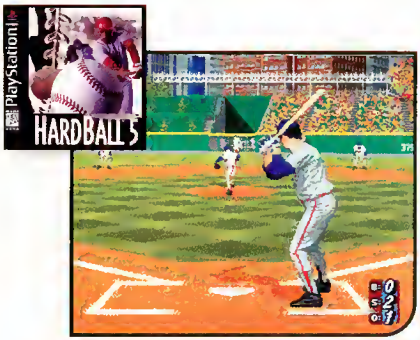
CONTROL — The controls do offer a wide selection of options, from aggressive or conservative throws to open or closed batting stances. Baserunners can be directed independently or in unison, but the former requires practice since you must cycle through the controls, moving from the batter through each runner until you reach the desired baserunner. Meanwhile, the game is continuing and the pitcher is firing away at your batter, who you no longer control. **7.0**

EXTRAS — On the upside, *Triple Play 97* features three batting and four fielding views, player create/trade features, five modes of gameplay, stat tracking (with the Stats Inc. license), and room for up to eight players with multitaps. It certainly won't qualify as the worst baseball game you've ever loaded up, but *Triple Play 97* has miles to go before it approaches the best. **7.5**

sports link — SIGNAL STRENGTH — **overall 7.1**

HARDBALL® 5

baseball



It's like clockwork. Each year another installment of the *Hardball* series hits store shelves, and to date it's remained the most detailed baseball simulation out there. Its features inject plenty of authenticity into the video game, through real-life additions such as injured/reserve lists, pitchers who must warm up before entering a game, and player trades and signings. As in past versions, *Hardball 5* lacks the MLB official license so team logos and nicknames are absent. However, the MLB Players' Association license stocks the rosters with all the big leaguers.

Although the Pitcher vs. Batter screen is attractive, the graphics beyond this screen are certainly not indicative of a PlayStation title. Furthermore, with each "safe" or "out" decision there's no audio umpire to make the call: instead, the pixelated words flutter above the base or fielder. What sound effects do make it into the game are weak. Veteran announcer Al Michaels has been reduced to an inarticulate robot, unable to piece syllables together smoothly.

3.0

As far as controls go, connecting with a pitch when batting is much more difficult than in other baseball titles (which, in actuality, is more true to reality). An extensive editing option allows you to alter everything from a player's statistics to a team's logo. And while the concentration on these areas helps make *Hardball 5* the most in-depth strategy simulation of baseball, it also causes the game's playability to suffer greatly.

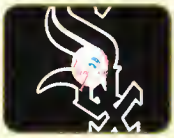
4.0

There are a handful of selectable views and five modes of play (Exhibition, Varied-Length Seasons, Batting Practice, Pitching Practice, and Home Run Derby). Abundant features aside, the game's drawbacks are enough to dissuade even the most sim-crazed baseball fan from buying into this latest *Hardball* installment. This game resembles past versions too closely and cries out for an overhaul on this popular series.

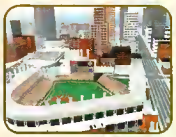
7.0

sports link

overall **4.5**



MLB Pennant Race kicks off in high gear. Its intro FMV sequence begins with an animated showcase of team logos. Then we see a dazzling montage of modeled figures and real-life game action that ends in a bang.



Triple Play 97 is enhanced by details (from a struck batter's pained expression to runners taking a lead off base) and magnificent sequences that show you the view you'd see if you flew into MLB stadiums.

Hardball 5 lets you edit team logos, but shuts up when it's time to call plays. Even though the game doesn't have an MLB license, players like Ken Griffey, Jr., still show up at gametime.

FORMULA 1

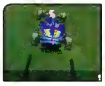
Formula 1 could almost be reviewed twice—once as an arcade-style racing game and again as a complex driving simulation. Casual racers will find immediate satisfaction in the Arcade mode, which plays like an elaborate update of *Pole Position*, only a bit easier (see if you don't record a win in your first couple of attempts).

Graphically, the texture-mapped tracks and landscapes are nothing short of a revelation. The game engine throttles along at 30 frames-per-second, yet racers glide with ease through the seamlessly redrawn track features (some 60,000 to 90,000 polygons are used for each of the 17 tracks). The rest of the game's presentation is equally superb, combining music tracks from guitar whizzes Joe Satriani and Steve Vai with commentary from British announcer Murray Walker.

Icons let you customize your point-and-click pit stops.

Although you can tweak your mean machine while in the Arcade mode, it's more of a necessity when you gear up for the Grand Prix. In this mode, the racing contains all the challenge you can stand. You'll feel the G's as you slide into Monte Carlo's insane hairpin turns or accelerate out of Interlago's daunting S-curves.

Although the Arcade mode supplies much fun, race game connoisseurs will thrill to the ultra-realistic Grand Prix mode. Here racing purists find all the details they could possibly want (e.g., spin off the track and your tires will get dirty; re-enter the course and the dirt flies off). Psygnosis incorporated real performance tendencies of actual cars and drivers, suggested by records from the '95 Formula 1 season. You



Go off-road and you'll make tracks.

Andretti RACING

The name Andretti means auto racing, so it only figures that someone would build a PlayStation title around one of racing's most celebrated families. With simple controls, solid graphics, and a career mode, *Andretti Racing* (from EA Sports) is an enjoyable title that's easy to jump right into. The game offers variety from the typical racing disc by offering both stock car and Indy car racing, while 16 different tracks keep the driving from growing monotonous.

The graphics are polygon-based and quite realistic—although some of the polygons do tear on occasion—and there are three selectable perspectives. You'll quickly adapt to the driving style, and changing car settings like gear ratios and downforce is also a breeze.

You can drive in the wrong direction, but the consequences could be severe.

Andretti Racing makes it possible for two players to battle on a split screen, while the link option allows four players to race simultaneously (as long as you have two PlayStations, two monitors, and two copies of the game).

As they've done in other titles, EA Sports uses a TV-style presentation, with classy looking menus that integrate video clips. Host commentary is supplied by studio anchor James Brown, Indy car authority Derek Daley, and stock car expert Bob Jenkins. Unfortunately, the video clips of these gentlemen are quite boring, as are the "racing school" instruction clips from Mario, Michael, and Jeff Andretti. Of course, the Andretti clan is known for driving, not teaching, and their game works where it counts most...on the racetrack. By delivering plenty of high-octane action, *Andretti Racing* makes a decent showing in the face of its most formidable foe—*Formula 1*.

FMV clips enliven menu screens.

PGA TOUR 97

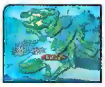
The *PGA Tour* series arrived on the PlayStation last year, unlike most of the EA Sports line. Now there's a follow-up title for '97, which unveils two new courses and a few cosmetic changes. Unfortunately, there's frighteningly little else in the way of innovation.

The game's introduction and menu screens have taken on an edgier appearance (something like ESPN2), while the actual on-course graphics have barely changed at all. However, now you do have a selection of nine "behind-the-golfer" camera angles for varying your perspective.

The mechanics of play are the same as before, with your swing determined by a reflex-testing power meter. A risk indicator has been added to the power meter to gauge exactly how tricky your current shot is, and a caddy option is also available, should you want a helper to coach you through each swing. Putting is the toughest challenge, since the angle of the topographical grid makes it difficult to accurately read the breaks in the green. A TV-style announcer frequently offers useful advice on the greens, and adds smooth commentary throughout the event.

A floating pin helps you determine the right approach for perfect putts.

Sawgrass and Spanish Bay are the two "celebrity" courses available, and a total of 11 play modes—including nine holes of stroke play, an 18-hole skins game, and a 72-hole tournament—improve the game's replay value. Players can choose to compete as or against 14 pros, each of whom have been digitized into the game. The only drawback to *PGA Tour 97*, aside from its numerous similarities to last year's version, is its often-lengthy disc-accessing time during play. All in all, though, the game earns its spot on the leaderboard.



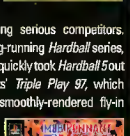
The course layout for Sawgrass: it's no pushover.

station sports link wrap-up

Here are the results of our first head-to-head sports competition...

Hockey All three games delivered dependable action, with only six-tenths of a review point separating the top and bottom scores. Each game had definite strengths; Sony's *NHL Face Off '97* scored with a "Multi-user Season Feature" that lets players track favorite teams through a regulation season. In terms of presentation, none of our games provided as much multimedia flourish as EA Sports' *NHL 97*, with a sensational FMV opening and TV-style graphics. Still, when the Zamboni cleared the rink, the only game left standing was ***NHL Powerplay '96*** (from Virgin/Radical Entertainment). It also contains multimedia extras, but its raal strength comes from absorbing gameplay, thrilling enough to give *NHL Powerplay '96* a decisive edge.

Football While four games came into the arena, only one can get the trophy. It's no surprise that *Madden 97* entered the contest as the crowd favorite (and deserves its reputation), but what did shock some was the stellar performance of Sony's *NFL GameDay '97*, which came out of nowhere with advanced control options complementing the brilliant action. The rest of our games had trouble keeping up; Acclaim's *NFL Quarterback Club '97*, despite interesting features (the abilities to drag tacklers and taunt opponents), suffered from hyper-pixelated graphics and a lack of a game announcer. Meanwhile, *Tecmo Super Bowl* just couldn't measure up in the looks department, resembling a 16-bit throwback. Final football results: ***Madden 97*** and ***NFL GameDay '97*** fought to a stand-still, tying in total review points. Our first head-to-head football competition ends in a draw.



Baseball This category had trouble fielding serious competitors. Accolade introduced a fifth version of their long-running *Hardball* series, but the game's poor graphics and marginal SFX quickly took *Hardball 5* out of contention. More pleasing was EA Sports' *Triple Play 97*, which benefited from presentation extras like 28 smoothly-rendered fly-in sequences to Major League stadiums, but oddly restricted gamers' ability to control their fielders. Least objectionable of all was ***MLB Pennant Race***, which had its own problems (like slow gameplay) but redeemed itself by having a full slate of control options, an important addition for a baseball game.

screengems

This is Screen Gems, station's showcase for exceptional graphics found in recent games. In our premiere issue we profile the high-res artwork of Tenka, MDK, Spider *and* Tobal #1.

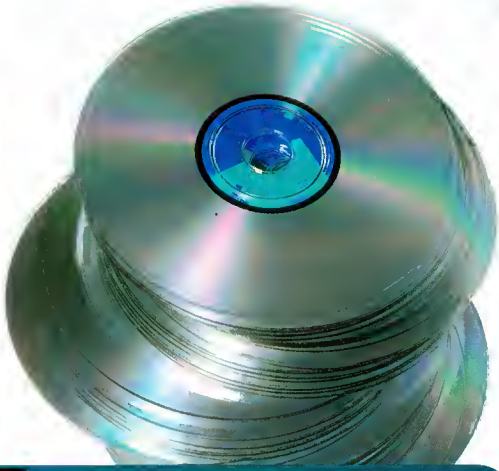
"Feel lucky, punk?" Psygnosis used Softimage-based 3D graphics to bring Tenka (and his pet gun) to life.

Micro-detailed texture-mapped characters and real-time 3D worlds enhance the much-anticipated blockbuster MDK, developed by Shiny Entertainment.

To render these mean cybernetic creatures (from Spider), Boss Game Studios used Alias and Nichimen graphics tools on Silicon Graphics Indigo Extreme and High Impact Graphic workstations.

Chuji-Wu, the martial arts powerhouse in Tobal #1, *moves so fast, that everything else around him blurs in comparison.*

Cheap Thrills



With more than 200 titles currently available, a great PlayStation game isn't hard to find. But what if the local game store has sold out of your first choice...and you want a cheap game to tide you over? Or maybe you're slightly strapped for cash, and can't afford a title that's just hit store shelves. Or perhaps you're searching for a reasonably-priced title that can add depth to your expanding library.

Well, good games can still be found cheaply—you just need to know where to look for them. For each issue, station will send trained shoppers into local bargain bins, hunting for great pre-owned PlayStation games. We'll report on (still) cool games that are now carrying reduced pricetags in various game stores coast-to-coast. Some of these titles are going for a mere third of their original price, so it's definitely worth your while to see what's out there.

Check your local retailer for these used games (and other inexpensive finds). Remember, these are used games, so you might be able to negotiate a lower price at the cash register. And if you come across a great deal, why keep it to yourself? Drop us a line so we can share news of your good fortune with the rest of our readers.

Write to: Cheap Thrills
c/o station Magazine
P.O. Box 2702
Greensboro, NC 27402

Destruction Derby *(Psygnosis)*

A superlative product that still gets play time on our PlayStations, *Destruction Derby* hinted at the processing power the PlayStation had under its hood. With multi-vehicle (and multi-collision) mayhem that drips with PlayStation effects goodness, *Destruction Derby* is a must-have racing title. It also features an often overlooked link-cable option that gives the game unlimited play value. Already a true classic, and an absolute steal at $24.95.

Original Price: $54.95
Expect to pay: $24.95 - 34.95

Kileak: The DNA Imperative *(Sony)*

Another *Doom* clone, but a pretty good one. The game arms you to the teeth and sends you into a research facility that's been rocked by mysterious occurrences. The graphics and sound effects are pretty impressive for a first generation PlayStation title, and you'll have plenty of game to keep you busy for a long time. Talk about your bargains—we found this one going for a wallet-pleasing $12.95.

Original Price: $54.95
Expect to pay: $12.95-$14.95

Assault Rigs *(Psygnosis)*

Assault Rigs was undeservedly overlooked when first released. Pitting tanks against each other in a 3D cyber-world, (its look and feel compare to the movie *Tron*) *Assault Rigs* was everything Cybersled should have been. But what really makes this game a standout is its link-cable option, where two players can slug it out in a cyber-combat zone. Sure, head-to-head play requires two copies of the game, but a pair of pre-owned copies of *Assault Rigs* still costs less than a single copy of a new game.

Original Price: $49.95
Expect to pay: $14.95-19.95

And now presenting...

the 50 Best PlayStation Games

Sometimes you can't stop yourself. Originally, this was supposed to be a ranking of the 25 top games created for the Sony PlayStation. The more we worked on our list, though, the clearer it became that we had a problem: Limited space was forcing us to omit many of the PlayStation's all-time winners. These titles also deserved their share of glory, prompting our next step: broadening the focus to include 50 games.

Our mission was simply to pick the best PlayStation games that have appeared during the system's first two years of existence. No other rules governed our selection process; games didn't have to be created solely for the PlayStation (imports from other systems were considered okay), and sequels were debated on their own merits, often eclipsing the original titles.

Everyone has their favorites, which is why lists like this provoke heated reactions. We encourage you to write us and let us know where your choices differ from ours.

50 number fifty

The Game: *Adidas Power Soccer*

The Story: The least promoted soccer game available for the PlayStation is also one of the best.
The Reason: If you've played *FIFA '97*, you'll know that EA is having an off year for soccer. *Adidas* is superior to *FIFA '97* in every way. For starters, the graphics engine is incredible—almost eclipsing the fluid animation of Sega's *WorldWide Soccer '97*. Every time a player moves, whether he's clutching his knee in pain or launching into the air, you'll be astounded by the fine motion-captured animation. The player control, despite the slightest of lag time (no where near as slow as *FIFA '97*), is excellent. And the special moves, explained through beautiful CG sequences, are innovative and exciting. There's no way you should be playing *FIFA '97* when this game's around.

49 forty-nine

The Game: *Motor Toon Grand Prix*

The Story: Cartoony racers bob and weave their way around wacky tracks.
The Reason: Although the Japanese *Motor Toon* didn't see a U.S. release, its sequel, *Motor Toon Grand Prix 2*, was released in the States as *Motor Toon Grand Prix*, and remains one of the most underrated racing games to date. It's got everything from beautiful graphics and a wonderful light-hearted soundtrack to spot-on play mechanics and oodles of hidden goodies.

The Game: *Philosoma*

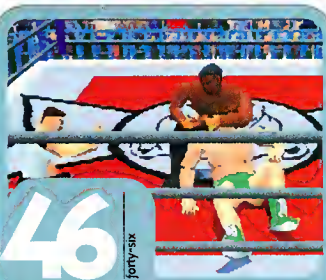
The Story: The first original shooter out of the Sony Japan stable, *Philosoma*, wowed us for months as we gazed in anticipation at so many Import game mags. Six available modes of play and CG from the gods was at hand... With Philosoma the intent was obvious: Take the shooting genre where it had never been before. By allowing the player six distinctively different play engines, Philosoma did indeed break new ground. With viewpoints switching from overhead to side-scrolling to coming right at you and everywhere in between, boredom literally never set in. And although the early parallax was a bit "cut-out" looking and the game was rather easy, it will forever remain a memorable shooting experience for PlayStation early adopters. If nothing else, the CG was revolutionary as was the level of interaction.

48 forty-eight

The Game: *Black Dawn*

The Story: Pilot a helicopter through a variety of rescue, recovery, and destructive missions.
The Reason: From Black Ops (creators of *Agile Warrior* and the forthcoming *Treasures of the Deep*) comes the latest in their string of arcade-type military simulations. *Black Dawn* may not have the sharpest graphics (more than sufficient, though), but it shines in the gameplay category, and features the tightest control since *WarHawk*. Fans of this genre finally have another high-quality title to play on the PlayStation. An especially notable mission: flying through the urban jungle, taking out crackhouses, druglabs, and gang cars, all under the shadow of the Hollywood sign.

47 forty-seven



46 forty-six

The Game: *Power Move Pro Wrestling*

The Story: Pound the mat and prove your ring dominance as one of 12 pro wrestlers.
The Reason: Based on the number one wrestling title in Japan, *Power Move Pro Wrestling* is an impressive 3D wrestling game that features gouraud-shaded wrestlers, each with his own unique wrestling style and set of moves (and, unfortunately, cultural stereotype). However, what makes the game really shine is its authentic wrestling moves and attention to gameplay. Quickly changing camera views and nice additions like a "rush mode," in which wrestlers get re-energized by crowd cheers, help make this a grapple-fest supreme.

The Game: *Bust A Move 2*

The Story: Story? What story. Shoot little bubbles up into other static bubbles, match the colors, and watch them fall. Hooray!!

The Reason: Any game as addictive as *Bust-A-Move 2* surely belongs in any top 50 list. An interesting take on the Tetris-inspired puzzle genre, *Bust-A-Move 2* is simple to learn and an absolute blast to play. Instead of the standard-issue pieces falling down, you shoot pieces up. Little candy-colored spheres, to be precise. Using the joypad to carefully aim your sphere, you fire it up into waiting spheres of multiple colors. Match a group of colors and they fall, along with any bubbles that were hanging from the popped ones. It's hugely addictive, especially in two player mode. You owe to yourself to try this game at least once.

45 forty-five

44 forty-four

The Game: *Deception*

The Story: Tecmo tries their hand at a different type of simulation. And it pays off...

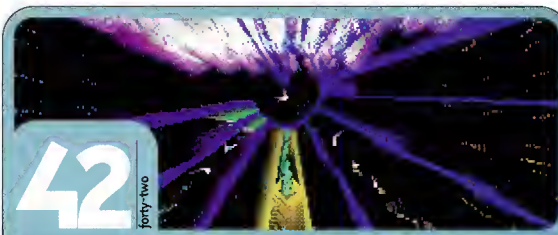
The Game: Wandering around a 3D texture-mapped fortress is always fun, especially when the castle is inhabited by an assortment of humans, and less savory beasts, all after your hide. However, in *Deception*, you're not armed with swords and armor. Instead, you must rely on traps to murder your adversaries. This cunning slant on the strategy genre works well, and leaves you plotting where to ambush that golem without ending up splattered on a nearby wall. Add to this heady concoction the ability to create zombies, an ongoing plot featuring the Devil himself, and you have one truly absorbing (not to mention adult) creep into the realm of 3D terror...

43 forty-three

The Game: *Die Hard Trilogy*

The Story: Experience all three blockbuster movies through the eyes of John McClane, the New York cop who's constantly in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The Reason: It takes skill to design a great video game, but to make three of them? And cram them all on one disc? Fox Interactive did just that, smartly exploiting the CD's massive storage capacity for *Die Hard Trilogy*. And while each game takes its premise and action scenes from a different *Die Hard* film, the goal of each game remains the same: Rescue the hostages, protect the innocent and slaughter the bad guys. Film buffs will respect *Die Hard Trilogy* for sticking to its source material, and all action-craving gamers will be swept up in the thrilling 3D explosions and arresting arcade-style action. Bonus: The CD audio delivers Bruce Willis-style sound bites in real-time ("Get the hell outta here!"). *Die Hard Trilogy* packs serious heat; other 3D action games can only wish they'd been crafted so well.



42 forty-two

The Game: *Tempest X*

The Story: Hmm, that's a tough one. Fling yourself around a vector web blasting alien baddies all in the name of... I don't know—and to be honest, it doesn't matter.

The Reason: Those hooked on the original '82 arcade classic know the reason. *Tempest* is a wonderfully abstract and straightforward shooter. This addictive game has stood the test of time and has been suitably updated for today's more tripped out audience. The once empty vector graphics have now been filled in with some psychedelic color cycling, light sourcing, and transparencies creating an exciting and highly unique visual experience. In terms of pure sensory stimulation, the PS' *Tempest X* surpasses even the excellent Jag update. There's never been anything before or since that feels quite like it. Rediscover this classic all over again.

The Game: *Cool Boarders*

The Story: Snowboarding on the PlayStation for best time and trick on the steepest slopes anywhere! No other snowboarding game comes close!

The Reason: There's nothing like shredding down some fast powder on a vertical dive. That's the idea behind *Cool Boarders*, in which you zip down the slopes as fast as you can, while trying to pull amazing tricks, flips, and grabs along the way. You'll start laughing out loud the first time you you pull off a fakie-to-misty 900-degree melancholy grab (with a double flip). And you can save a ghost image of your best run to a memory card, so you can try and out-shred yourself anytime you want. Great variety of boards and riders, and even a hidden snowman 'boarder (on a dustpan!)!

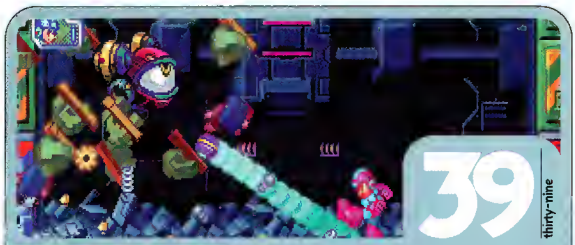
41 forty-one

40 number forty

The Game: *Tenka*

The Story: In the year 2096 a super soldier named Tenka attempts to stop a super-corporation named Trojan Inc. from manufacturing an army of bionoids on Extrevius 328-B.

The Reason: *Tenka* is the first PS corridor shooter to offer 3D polygon enemies instead of the usual 2D sprite enemies. The engine is smooth, the music is hardcore and the game has a dark, moody aesthetic that really contributes to the overall atmosphere. The 3D enemies look great and animate smoothly, while the levels are compact and well designed.



39 thirty-nine

The Game: *MegaMan 8*

The Story: That villain Dr. Wily's at it again—and only MegaMan can stop him.

The Reason: Yeah, it's a 2-D action game. Guess what? It's way more fun that the vast majority of polygon titles out there—and that's why we play video games... I think. *MegaMan 8* expands on Capcom's tried-and-true, decade-old series by adding the company's trademark ultrasmooth hand-drawn animation and numerous never-before-seen gameplay techniques—quite an admirable trait for a modern 2-D game.

The Game: *Nanotek Warrior*

THE STORY: In the 23rd century, Nano-robots achieve sentience and attempt to wipe out their human creators. You must pilot a remote-controlled Nanotek ship into the heart of Nano-space to save humanity.

THE REASON: *Nanotek Warrior* is the definitive PlayStation 3D shooter. Others have attempted to represent the genre, but *NW* gets it right. First, by successfully infusing a 3D game with the solid play mechanics of a 2D shooter, gameplay isn't sacrificed for graphics. This is backed by accurate and fair game controls, the kind of 'twitch' control so rare in 3D games. Secondly, *NW* has excellent level design. The giant tubes of Nano-space branch into multiple paths, challenging jumping sections, and both mid and end boss sections. *Nanotek*'s greatest feat, however, lies in its non-stop intensity. This is not an easy game, nor should it be, and the endless barrage of enemy and environmental hazards will keep your adrenaline flowing and your eyes darting about the screen madly.

38 thirty-eight

The Game: *Jet Moto*

The Story: Four teams of futuristic jet-hover-bikes racing at breakneck speeds through everything from a log-infested backwater swamp to a piecemeal-steel track suspended miles above terra firma, and even a course composed entirely of huge blocks of slippery ice!

The Reason: It takes quite a lot to stand out in the PlayStation's formidable library of racing titles, but *Jet Moto* pulls it off and then some. Four teams (one of which is all female) of five riders each yield 20 different combinations of speed and handling from which to choose. SingleTrac continues to deserve its reputation for excellent control (first earned with the awesome *WarHawk*), with another title that handles beautifully (although the learning curve is pretty steep). Beautiful art, amazing graphics, highly original track designs (including a couple of suicide tracks which loop back on themselves), a two-player split-screen mode, and an incredible Link Wray-ish soundtrack come together to create an extremely fun, infinitely replayable, excellent title every racing game fanatic should have in his collection. *Jet Moto* rocks!

37 thirty-seven

36 thirty-six

The Game: *Soviet Strike*

The Story: You pilot a covert chopper sent into war-torn regions of the Soviet Union on a variety of hit-and-run helicopter missions.

The Reason: As the 32-bit update of the highly addictive *Strike* series, *Soviet Strike* features wonderfully produced FMV sequences that pull the game's storyline together seamlessly. Plus, toss in real-time, photo-realistic battlefields and straightforward mission objectives, and *Soviet Strike* sucks the player into scenarios ripped right from today's headlines. Ivan meets the New World Order in this engaging helicopter action-fest.

The Game: *Destruction Derby 2*

The Story: Just as the name suggests, this is an all out bash fest. As much as simple racing, this title is all about destroying your opponents.

The Reason: I think humans inherently like to destroy things, and *Destruction Derby 2* gives humans an inordinate amount of opportunities to destroy. Further evolving concepts laid out in *DD1*, *DD2* adds the physics necessary for cars to leave the ground in collisions. This makes for some wild smash ups and general chaos. For a raw, brutal experience that just about anyone can enjoy, make a few runs through The Bowl (a free-for-all, circular enclosure). The fun of spinning other cars around and just ramming into them is a purely 20th century thrill not to be missed.

35 thirty-five

33 thirty-three

The Game: *Re-Loaded*

The Story: After a daring escape in *Loaded*, F.U.B. (Fat Ugly Boy) finds a new planet, a new body, and a new fascination. Now he's C.H.E.B. (Charming Handsome Erudite Bastard), and he plans to terrorize whole planets with his unique tastes in decor. Six crazed assassins re-load to take him on.

The Reason: *Re-Loaded* is a great, great sequel. The plotline is immeasurably nastier, the characters (and their morbid CG intros) are downright sinister, and the levels are bigger and bloodier than ever. There's two new characters, the Consumer and Sister Magpie, and a ton of new enemy fodder to eliminate. The graphics have been updated, and a 3/4 view has been incorporated, allowing you to see more playfield than in the original game. Most importantly, the gameplay has been tweaked so that exploration and puzzle-solving have become integral elements of the game. Everything either looks better, plays better, or sounds better than the original, and isn't that what a sequel is all about?

32 thirty-three

The Game: *Twisted Metal 2*

The Story: Calypso is back and this time his demented tournament extends to cover the rest of the globe.

The Reason: Ever felt like blowing up the Eiffel Tower and seeing it slowly topple over? How about playing smash-up derby on moving ice glaciers? Well, *Twisted Metal 2* gives you the opportunity to do those things and much more. The game gets in gear with an eye-catching FMV and ends with a completely different FMV for each character—so there's incentive to finish the game with every character. Not only are there twelve different cars from which to choose, but there are also two secret cars you can access. Causing so much destruction means you need plenty of weapons, and, boy, you sure got 'em. By using these mayhem-makers in conjunction with your advanced attacks, you can maximize your ability to inflict damage. Destruction just couldn't be any more enjoyable... and that evil psycho clown is still scary as hell.

34 thirty-four

The Game: *Command & Conquer*

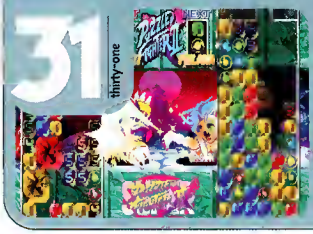
The Story: In an alternative future two military forces (the GDI and the Brotherhood of Nod) are locked in a deadly battle for global supremacy. This is war!

The Reason: One of the greatest (and best-selling) PC action/strategy titles of all time makes the conversion to the PS intact. The real-time resource management and deeply tactical combat is infuriatingly addictive, and requires considerable gray matter to go with the usual itchy trigger finger. Amass an army of unmatchable power then crush your opposition like flies!

The Game: *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*

The Story: Popular Capcom characters fight it out in classic puzzle game style.

The Reason: Wanting their new puzzle title to stand out from the rest of the crowd, Capcom decided to incorporate a cast of characters from their line of fighting games to spruce up its look and feel. The result is a game which will first catch your eye due to the super-deformed characters acting cute and fighting one another, but will convince you to stay due to its addictiveness. The gameplay is far from revolutionary, borrowing ideas from titles such as *Puyo Puyo* and *Baku Baku*, but the fun you have when playing will quickly make you forget its lack of originality.



31 thirty-one

30 number thirty

The Game: *Rally Cross*

The Story: Take twenty different vehicles, thirty-six track variations, mix in three tough-as-nails computer opponents, put them all together into a graphics masterpiece of a game, and you've got *Rally Cross*.

The Reason: *Rally Cross* features probably the most realistic physics ever in a video game. You'll feel every crunch, bump and roll (accompanied by wince-inducing creaks and groans), as you try to negotiate your chosen vehicle around the tracks without flipping yourself over. The control is quite tight and responsive, once you're accustomed to the fact that you're driving on dirt (or sand or mud or ice or rock, etc.). Graphically, *Rally Cross* is astounding, with light-sourcing from beyond (you'll weep at the use of sun and shade in the garden course). Six tracks, each available forward or backward, with three variations each, makes 36 track variations from which to choose. And there are (eventually) 20 selectable vehicles, and Normal, Head-on, Mixed, and Suicide modes to challenge even the hardest of hardcore gamers. Beating Suicide Mode on the hardest difficulty is not an easy thing to do, but, boy, does it feel good when you do!

29 twenty-nine

The Game: *Pandemonium!*

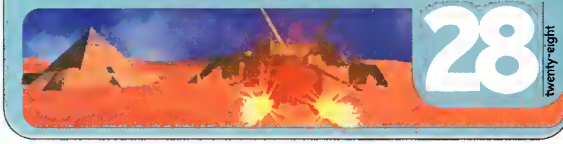
The Story: A mischievous jester and an elfin sprite unleash magical forces, setting the stage for much running and jumping and jumping and running.

The Reason: *Pandemonium!* is a welcome return to the roots of 2D side-scrolling action games. Of course, now the package has been improved with gorgeously rendered graphics and action that's shown from a variety of dazzling and dizzying Real Camera perspectives. Play control and character interaction are easily grasped, making it an excellent choice for beginners, who probably won't mind so much that the challenge level tapers off before you're halfway through the game.

The Game: *Warhawk*

The Story: You pilot a flying doomsday machine against the organized forces of Kreel.

The Reason: Soon after the PlayStation launched, *Warhawk* roared onto the scene, jetting to almost overnight success. Not only did it push practically every special effect button in the Sony game box, it was a powerfully addictive game that showcased the most inviting aspects of next-generation 3D game design. Directed by Sony Interactive, developer SingleTrac interwove scorchingly hot gameplay with full motion video. In the process, they produced an explosive, overpowering video game experience that still unleashes flying death and rolling thunder...and lots of each.



28 twenty-eight

The Game: *Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits*

The Story: Relive the early '80s video game boom with six great classics, including the groundbreaking *Defender* and *Robotron 2084*.

The Reason: Another arcade collection, this one courtesy of America's coin-op kings, Williams. Top picks have to include *Defender*, *Robotron 2084* and a fabulous 1- or 2-player version of the ostrich-flapping *Joust*. There's even nostalgic fun to be had in diversions like *Defender 2* and *Sinistar*, a long-forgotten classic. While younger gamers may not see the point in this or other retro collections, they would do well to invest some time in these archives. It was no accident that these games kicked off the video game revolution.

27 twenty-seven

26 twenty-six

The Game: *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain*

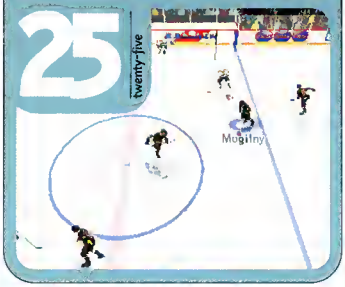
The Story: Returning from the dead, the once-proud nobleman Kain now walks the earth as a vampire, seeking revenge on all responsible parties.

The Reason: Combining a variety of programming methods and gameplay techniques, *Legacy of Kain* couples a horrific storyline with an RPG adventure. Kain searches for blood and lost souls he can use to help him carry on his parasitic legacy. The excessively violent content and spooky FMV aren't for the faint of heart—or younger gamers. But for those who yearn for something out of the ordinary, something a little shocking, and something you'll *never* see on any competing system... then this game is for you.

The Game: *NHL Face-Off '97*

The Story: Sony's hockey sequel plays like a dream.

The Reason: Like almost all the games Sony develops in-house, *NHL Face-Off '97* is an excellent all-around product. The graphics engine is superb, tossing around a giant polygonal rink and loads of sprite-based players effortlessly. The play mechanics are just as solid, offering smooth controls and excellent use of camera views to enhance the experience. The whole package is complimented by a mass of options (like trading & player editing) and a full NHL license.



The Game: *Tail of The Sun*

The Story: Imagine you are a lonely (and lowly) caveman dropped into this world without a brain in your head, an under-developed body, and basically not a clue as to what to do.

The Reason: Art Dink, the kings of alternative gaming actually put the game player in those very shoes (well, not shoes, let's say, uh, feet). The task at hand, through the whimsical free-form 3D gameplay, soon becomes clear. Kill for meat... bring it home. And should you cross paths with a woolly mammoth, slay the beast and secure its tusks to build... (what else!) a scaffold reaching to that burning ball in the sky. With a truly inspired ambient soundtrack, generously light sourced worlds that seem endless, comedy until you can't laugh no more, and several levels of cultural upgrade, *Tail of the Sun* can only be described one way... revolutionary. Play it 'til you pass out.

The Game: *Formula 1*

The Story: The most realistic Formula One simulation on the PlayStation, with more options than any other console title.

The Game: Don't think that this Psygnosis masterpiece is simply a laborious trip around eighty laps of tarmac (though it can be if you wish; you've got options for an arcade mode, link-up, widescreen televisions and even Dolby Surround!), the extra features are just the tip of the iceberg. *F1* plays an astoundingly real and downright intense game of driving; the real reason why any self-respecting racing fan should have this in his/her gaming collection. Seventeen courses and your choice of any F1 driver are just some of the features Psygnosis crammed into their spectacularly successful attempt to recreate the entire 1995 F1 season in silicon.

The Game: *NHL '97*

The Story: The PlayStation debut of EA Sports' *NHL* series.

The Reason: *NHL '97* features all the extras you'd expect from a quality EA game, like a VCR-like Instant Replay feature that lets you rehash plays frame by frame. Included in the package are player trades, numerous play modes and *fighting*! While *NHL '97* is a sharp-looking game, there are a few control glitches. Overall, though, the polygon-based players (65 of which make the signature moves of NHL All-Stars) and the 13 different camera angles round out another great EA Sports presentation.

The Game: *Jumping Flash! 2*

The Story: The much anticipated sequel to the ground-breaking 3D platformer.

The Reason: OK, OK, so it's no great mystery that we love this game. But hey, it's just that Robbit is the cutest biomechanical robo-bunny we've ever encountered. Of course, a cool lead character alone does not make a great game. Luckily, in this instance there is more. The game doesn't fool with what made the first title such a success; it keeps the same basic layout as its predecessor. Players collect power-ups and other items scattered throughout the game... but now there's even more game. Great action and wacky bosses (not to mention the return of the deliciously wicked Baron Aloha) work together to take the genre leaps further than it had ever been. This game has personality *plus*.

20 number twenty

The Game: *Broken Helix*

The Story: In the near future, bomb disposal expert Jake Burton is called in to disarm explosives planted by a terrorist inside Area 51. But all is not what it seems....

The Reason: One of the few attempts at an "interactive movie" that has really worked. Expect multiple story-lines, cinematic cut-scenes, large guns and Bruce Campbell as the voice of Jake Burton, all wrapped up in a smooth 3D graphics engine. *Broken Helix* takes the corridor genre in an experimental new direction, and proves that there is more to POV shooters than just killing.

19 nineteen

The Game: *NBA Shoot Out '97*

The Story: "Net Worth" Sony's making a title run at all the major sports.

The Reason: Not the best sim, and not the best of the arcade-types, but the best fusion of both styles yet. Sony introduces the revolutionary "Icon Passing," the most direct and accurate passing system in existence. Coupled with an upbeat tempo, on-the-fly play calling, up to the minute stat-tracking, and motion captured graphics, makes this the most entertaining hoop title around. If basketball is your game, this one's money.

The Game: *Madden NFL '97*

The Story: The latest version of video gaming's most popular football franchise.

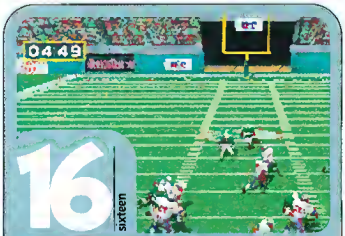
The Reason: *Madden NFL '97* is an incredible football simulation that controls as easily as its earlier arcade-like predecessors but also tosses in state-of-the-art PlayStation extras like Motion Capture for better player movement, broadcast-quality FMV intros, unlimited camera angles and CD-driven commentary by Madden and Pat Summerall. The result: an unstoppable pigskin package that replicates the experience of *watching* football (on TV) as much as playing football. EA Sports basically defined the sports genre in the 16-bit age and this game does nothing but extend their domination of the category. *Madden NFL '97* marks another confident step forward in sports video gaming.

18 eighteen

The Game: *RayStorm*

A high dollar coin-op that barely saw the light of day in America, Taito's *RayStorm* will shake shooting fans to the very core of their rapid fire fingers. A mix of high octane 2.5D and 3D gameplay in which all is rendered, *RayStorm* is the pinnacle of PS shooters. From the opening seconds to the grueling (and massive) last stand, *RayStorm* puts a death grip on your eyes and ears. With boss sequences as brutal as they come and a pulsing soundtrack from renowned Taito recording artists, Zuntata, *RayStorm* pleases on all counts. The quality of the texture maps is unsurpassed, special effects shoot out almost constantly and as I said, the bosses are magnificent creatures that come alive on screen. Even more splendid is that, in the event you've played the coin-op game, Taito has added an additional PS-only mode which employs new color schemes, explosions and, arranged music. No shooting fan should be without *RayStorm*!

17 seventeen



16 sixteen

The Game: *NFL GameDay '97*

The Story: Sony suits up for a second gridiron outing.

The Reason: As the sequel to the PlayStation's first football game, *NFL GameDay '97* is an outstanding and straightforward presentation of football. All 30 NFL teams are represented by unbelievably well-animated players (sprite-based). The game's real strength, though, lies in the advanced options that enhance existing controls. In addition to basic moves (like spins and bursts of speed), players can add "english" by working the L & R buttons when making moves. Coolest example: You're on offense, with only a yard separating you from a TD. Instead of making a standard jump into the middle of the fray, *NFL GameDay '97* lets you take a leaping dive up and over the pile of tacklers. Now *that's* football.

The Game: *Wild Arms*

The Story: Three young loners team up to save a Wild West-themed fantasy world from ultimate evil.

The Reason: Simply judging *Wild Arms* on its basic RPG aspects might warrant it a space in the top 50—it has good graphics, an excellent battle system, a long, varied quest and good music—but that's only part of *Wild Arms*' appeal. This exceptional title takes the orthodox RPG system one step further by adding *Zelda* and *Lufia*-style situational puzzles and action RPG elements—the game's brilliant "Goods System" breathes new life into traditional Japanese top-down role-players.

15 fifteen

The Game: *Tobal No. 1*

13 thirteen

The Story: Fighters from all over the universe gather on planet *Tobal*, ready to fight to the death for bragging rights.

The Reason: The fighters in *Tobal* move more fluidly and realistically than even the super-smooth *Tekken 2*. However, this smoothness comes at a price: the faces and bodies of *Tobal No. 1* are flat, textureless polygons, as opposed to the more complex texture-mapped physical features found in other games (like *Tekken 2*). Nonetheless, the action is amazing and well-worth the graphics trade-off. Lethal foot-sweeps glide across the floor in a beautiful blur, with motion that's both smooth and lifelike. The Quest Mode is another nice addition, providing one more dimension to the game.

12 twelve

The Game: *Street Fighter Alpha 2*

The Story: Ryu, Ken and the bunch return for more butt-kicking action.

The Reason: With sensational graphics, 18 beautifully animated characters and really responsive controls, *SFA 2* is more than a standard beat-'em-up, it's an *arcade-perfect* beat-'em-up. Thank goodness there's an extensive training mode so beginners can hone their Super Combo and Custom Combo moves. Add a combo meter to the mix for added depth and gameplay and you've got a great game. Bonus: the ability to goad your opponents (please, only one taunt per round).

14 fourteen

The Game: *Star Gladiator*

The Story: A stellar group of fighters must save Earth from the marauding 4th Empire.

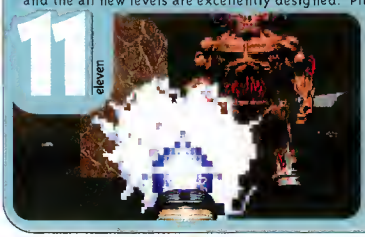
The Reason: As Capcom's first excursion into the spacey realm of 3D fighting games, *Star Gladiator* erupts onto the screen with ten colorful characters that have more moves than a macarena line. Set in a colorfully violent future, each combatant uses a unique futuristic weapon—a la *Battle Arena Toshinden*. Weapons like Hayato's Plasma Blade and Gore's Plasma Mace are rendered with intense light-sourcing that really adds punch to the package. The detailed moving backgrounds are crammed with everything from rotating satellites to roaring spaceships. For gamers who've grown tired of fighting in the unfeeling present, *Star Gladiator* is your time machine to fresh new alien worlds and cultures—and it's a trip that's well worth taking.

The Game: *Final Doom*

The story: The Space Marine from *Doom* is back. Apparently he missed a couple of demons on his last trip to hell. And that's just not good enough.

The reason: *Doom* may be old, but the engine is smooth, the action is intense and the all new levels are excellently designed. Plus, *Final Doom* ranks as the single best reason to own a Sony Link-Up cable. You haven't lived till you've played a two player deathmatch. Simple controls, simple game mechanics, panic inducing gameplay: *Doom* is indeed a classic among classics.

11 eleven



10 number ten

The Game: *PowerSlave*

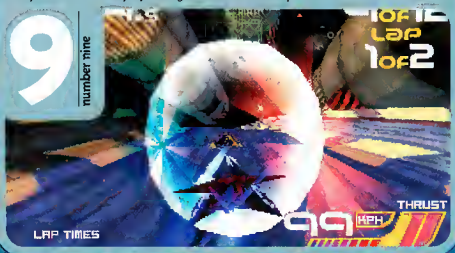
The Story: Aliens have invaded Egypt and exhumed the body of King Ramses from his tomb in Karnak. Stop them before they use his power to take over the world.

The Reason: The best corridor shooter on PS, and quite possibly the best single player corridor experience ever. *PowerSlave* features an innovative non-linear level structure, a super slick graphics engine, fearsome enemies, exceptional sounds, fully 3D level design that borders on genius and enough secrets to keep you playing for months. Literally.

The Game: *Wipeout XL*

The Story: The year is 2097 and anti-gravity racing is the world's most popular sport. You join the competition by piloting a hovercraft-style jet over twisting, slalom-like courses.

The Reason: While the first *Wipeout* broke plenty of ground, *Wipeout XL* takes the futuristic premise of anti-gravity racing and completely blows every other driving game off the road. To better the existing formula, the development team concentrated on *more:* more tracks, more weapons, more racers, and more eye-bugging visuals. Plus, factor in the improved computer AI and a supersonic techno soundtrack (provided by such dance kings as Future Sound of London, Prodigy, and the Chemical Brothers) and you've got a game that will give you a first-rate nosebleed before you even drive it home. The furious-paced racing and liquid-smooth graphics are truly exceptional. Bottom Line: No other driving game showcases the PlayStation's variety of strengths better than *Wipeout XL*.



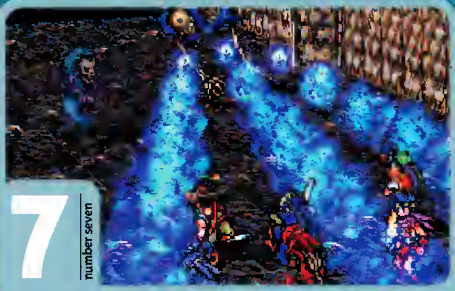
9 number nine

8 number eight

The Game: *Rage Racer*

The Story: Race through some of the most impressive console driving game environments ever at absolutely mind blowing speeds.

The Reason: Namco's *R Racer* series has long been a favorite for its speed, graphics, and intense powersliding physics. *Rage Racer* takes it to a whole new level with one of the best looking and fastest racing engines out there. With 13 cars to (eventually) choose from, four distinct courses (plus backwards), and a HARD techno soundtrack, this is pure adrenaline-pumping racing. The track design is brilliant with steep hills and sharp corners forcing the player to know the course intimately. To distract you is the wonderful scenery-dense cities, Greek ruins, planes flying about—all at a zippy and unwavering 30 fps. This is probably the best racing title available on PS.

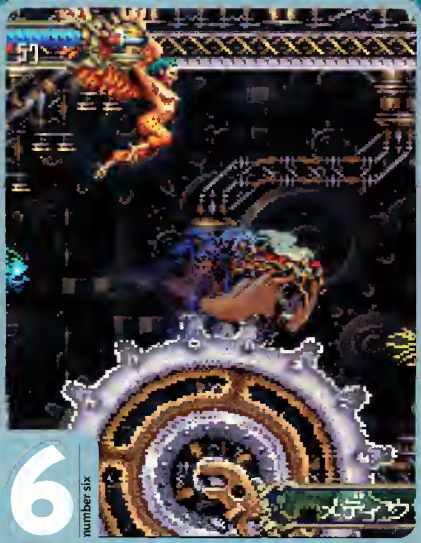


7 number seven

The Game: *Suikoden*

The Story: A young hero assembles an army of supporters to overthrow a corrupt empire, which includes his father!

The Reason: With PlayStation owners practically begging for quality role-playing games for their system, Konami decided to take a chance and released *Suikoden* for the US market. The risk paid off, rewarding Konami with a top-selling hit and giving gamers a superb Japanese-style RPG to enjoy. While the quest was somewhat on the short side, it let the player experience an epic storyline filled with an enormous cast of characters and a beautiful soundtrack. *Suikoden* shows quite a bit of promise, and could end up becoming a well-loved and respected series alongside *Final Fantasy*.



6 number six

The Game: *Castlevania: Symphony of Night*

The Story: After Richter defeats Dracula at the end of *Dracula X* he mysteriously disappears. Alucard and Maria return to Dracula's castle to uncover the truth.

The Reason: One of the greatest platform/adventures ever. Anyone who doubts the PS's 2D powers should see this in action and believe. Perfect control, unbelievable music, insane graphics and a couple of surprises that will leave *Castlevania* fans gasping. Let's just say that *Symphony of Night* turns the genre upside down.

5 number five

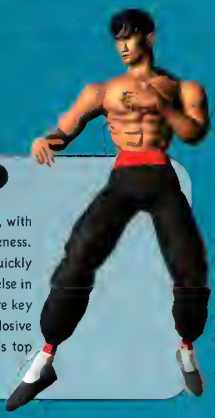
The Game: *Crash Bandicoot*

The Story: You're an Australian critter on the run from Dr. Neo Cortex—a mad scientist bent on global domination. Sadly, your girlfriend is still in the bad doctor's clutches and his henchmen are hot on your trail.

The Reason: While its concept and execution are firmly rooted in the 2D side-scrolling platform format, *Crash Bandicoot* is still the only next-generation game completely rendered in 3D. That's right, unlike other games that have flat 2D objects that rotate to face the camera (or player's POV), everything is totally 3D (and we do mean EVERYTHING). Since *Crash* is basically a standard side-scrolling action game (seen from various views), it's easy to play, understand, and discover—even by first-timers. The developers, Naughty Dog, utilized the PlayStation's enormous color palette to breathe life into the rich tropical backgrounds, while supplying *Crash* with enough light-hearted, cartoonish antics to keep gamers amused. *Crash Bandicoot* hits high on our 50 Best List for two reasons: 1) It's the best platform game made for the PlayStation, and 2) It's the sharpest update of the genre that's the foundation of the entire industry.

4 number four

The Game: *Tekken 2*



The Story: In *Tekken,* after several long-fought battles, the imposing Heihachi is finally beaten and hurled off a cliff. Unfortunately, they should have found a higher cliff.

The Reason: Namco, arcade gods that they are, decided to take a 3D fighting game and transform it into a 3D fighting epic. The story is launched through a spectacular minute-plus FMV intro, and continues to unfold as you battle your way through the original *Tekken* line-up and a host of extra characters. The game itself is a direct arcade translation, with straightforward controls and neck-snapping responsiveness. Even novice gamers or players new to the genre will quickly become addicted because it plays better than anything else in the category. Its flawless presentation and execution are key reasons why the fighting game genre has risen to explosive new levels of popularity. *Tekken 2* is the PlayStation's top fight fest, and a must-have for any game library.

3
number three

The Game: *Resident Evil*

The Story: As a member of an elite commando squad, you're sent to investigate a government-run biotech research facility that has mysteriously gone off-line.

The Reason: Capcom shipped its *Resident Evil* preview disc in a box full of plastic spiders and cobwebs. Many game mags scoffed at the promotion, but few laughed when they sat down to play the actual game—which is just as frightening as any good Friday night horror flick and every bit as scary as Capcom predicted. *Resident Evil* was the first made-for-console 3D adventure of its kind. With pre-rendered backgrounds, texture-mapped polygon-modeled characters, and a chilling ambiance, the game felt more like a Hitchcock movie than a video game. It is also excessively violent, which contributes to its appeal (*Resident Evil* remains the best-selling PlayStation game worldwide). Despite a few faults, like ridiculously bad voice acting and slow loading time, it's still an incredible, heart-pounding ride. It's no wonder then that *Resident Evil 2* is the most anticipated PlayStation sequel since *Tekken 2*.

RESIDENT EVIL™

2
number two

The Game: *Tomb Raider*

The Story: Meet Lara Croft, a sexy female explorer with an attitude. Her *Indiana Jones*-style adventures send her into creepy forbidden ruins, in search of priceless artifacts and ancient collectibles. For this pistol-packin' treasure hunter, no risk is too great and no treasure is unattainable.

The Reason: *Tomb Raider* takes arresting FMV, realistic light-source shading, and ample amounts of polygons to whip up a tasty gaming stew. This Saturday-matinee-styled action/adventure keeps you perched on the edge of your seat, and gives you complete character control. Lara and her surroundings (as well as the enemies she fights and items she collects) are rendered and texture-mapped in glorious 3D. But stupendous graphics alone are not why it earned the Number Two spot. *Tomb Raider* won its spot because behind all the eye-catching visuals is actually a great game—and A LOT of game at that. From crocodiles to a *T-Rex*, from bats to rolling boulders... its variety and charm assures that *Tomb Raider* never bores. This engaging adventure could easily be the most intriguingly beautiful 3D platform game to date.

1 number one

The Game: ***Final Fantasy VII*** *(US release: September 7th, 1997)*

The Story: Er, well, it's a bit too complicated to sum up in a few sentences, but rest assured it's the best video game storyline. Ever. It's mature, totally unexpected twists and turns will leave you in an almost constant state of shock.

The Reason: The reasons are innumerable. *FFVII* has the best graphics ever seen on PlayStation (perhaps the best seen on *any* platform,) some of the best music ever composed, over 30 minutes of unbelievably high-quality rendered CG and the most enthralling quest we've ever encountered. You're not just doing the same thing over and over—i.e., going from dungeon to dungeon and town to town—*FFVII* is broken up with numerous "mini" games, many of which rival full-fledged games in their respective categories. After you finish *FFVII* a hole will be torn in your gaming soul that only another game of this quality will be able to heal... But don't worry, Square has five or six *other* PS games coming in '97.

SECU
OFFI

CRASH BANDICOOT

HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

Or

"How a Marsupial with an Attitude Became the Unofficial Flagship Character of a Video Game Platform and Found Happiness as the Focal Point of a Multi-million Dollar Ad Campaign."

He's an unlikely hero, and we're not exactly sure if we're supposed to root for him or laugh at him. His costume is simple—no shirt, only sports shorts and hightop sneakers (like he just came from a shirts 'n' skins hoops game). He's a scraggly character, his orange coat spiky from too much time in the bush. When he looks out at us, it's rarely with the kind of confidence we expect from a Mario or Sonic. This guy looks more like a less confident Wile E. Coyote, like he's ready to duck and run from trouble. No two ways about it, Crash Bandicoot doesn't look like your average video game superstar—and maybe that's the point. ▸

HIGH VISIBILITY

If you watch TV or read magazines, you've probably met Crash Bandicoot, even if you've never played the game bearing his name. With a multi-faceted ad campaign promoting both the character and game, Crash Bandicoot has maintained a high profile since the game's release last September.

Why so much publicity? Well, Crash Bandicoot isn't merely a videogame character—he's a pitchman for all things PlayStation. (In some TV spots, Crash promotes his own game. In other ads, he spreads the word about PlayStation titles like *Jet Moto* and *NHL FaceOff '97*.)

Although Sony Computer Entertainment of America hasn't officially named Crash Bandicoot as the PlayStation's spokes-character, he appears to be their de facto choice. No doubt Sony is hoping that the wily bandicoot will shine as a system figurehead, and remain an electric presence even when his game isn't switched on.

BANDICOOT IN A NUTSHELL

For the uninitiated, here's the premise behind Crash Bandicoot: Just off Australia's southeast coast lies a chain of small islands, headquarters of Dr. Neo Cortex, an evil mastermind with a super-sized noggin (and ego to match). His sole motivation is global domination; to promote his evil purposes, Dr. Cortex has created two new inventions—the Evolvo-Ray, to give the animals superior brain power, and the Cortex Vortex, to instill obedience. These gadgets are designed to brainwash all the native creatures of the islands into serving him.

One of these animals is a marsupial named Crash Bandicoot.

All of the doctor's experiments have failed, but none so dramatically as Crash, who realizes the doctor's intentions and is finally exiled from Dr. Cortex's castle to an isolated locale two islands away. Your job is maneuvering Crash through perilous 3D environments, defeating enemies and collecting power-ups along the way. If you help Crash make it back to Castle Cortex, he can save his beloved girlfriend, Tawna. Time is of the essence, though, because Tawna is the next unwilling subject scheduled for experimentation.

DIFFERENCES YOU CAN SEE

Crash Bandicoot has become a spokes-character in the tradition of Mario (the plumber) and Sonic (the hedgehog). Like these other characters, Crash runs, jumps, and finds objects in his game. What separates *Crash Bandicoot* from other platform games are its unprecedented graphics. Two reasons account for its impressive look. For starters, *Crash Bandicoot* is rendered from top to bottom in 3D, freeing gamers from the usual monotonous sideview. 3D rendering not only means we see the action from Crash's point of view (more or less), but we can also see various objects within the game from a full 360-degree perspective. Another reason for *Crash Bandicoot*'s visual brilliance is the extraordinary palette of colors that the developer, Naughty Dog, utilized to create the lush island paradises.

THE CHARACTERS BEHIND THE CHARACTER

Naughty Dog brought ten years of game-crafting experience to their work on *Crash Bandicoot*. The company was founded by two friends (Andy Gavin, Jason Rubin), who were creating video games when they were still teenagers. During years of system-hopping, the pair developed games for PC (*Keef the Thief*), Sega Genesis (*Rings of Power*), and 3DO (*Way of the Warrior*). Naughty Dog's work for these systems helped them land a three-project deal with Universal Interactive in 1994.

By early '95, Naughty Dog was bringing in additional talent, putting together the crew that would breathe life into the bandicoot. Naughty Dog also consulted specialists like background artist Joe Pearson ("Duck Tales") and animator Charles Zembillas (*An American Tail*, "Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?"). Game music came from a surprising source: Mark Mothersbaugh, founding member of Devo. Within a year and a half, the eight-member production team at Naughty Dog had created the finished *Crash Bandicoot*.

"READY WHEN YOU ARE, C.B."

It takes a different kind of ad campaign to promote a character as uniquely cool and offbeat as

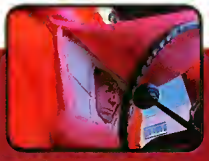
Crash Landing on the Net

You can't be a with-it kind of spokes-character without having your own Internet address. Crash can be found at SCEA's web site (http://www.sony.com.). In addition to game info, character bios and photos, and a scrapbook of Crash's "American Tour," you can explore an on-line game/contest featuring the PlayStation's favorite fur-bearer.

To enter "Bandicoot Pursuit," Crash's on-line game and contest, you have to register your e-mail address with SCEA by March 31, 1997. Basically, you're scooting along the island looking for seven gems, which you then place in a holder called the Great Mantle. One Grand Prize winner will receive a trip for two (three days, two nights) to Universal Studios Florida or to any location in California (as chosen by the winner). Complete instructions and prize details are available at the site itself.

Travels With Crash

Sony took Crash's act on the road with this fall's "Man in the Bandicoot Suit" campaign. Although Crash (or rather, the guy portraying him) visited neighborhoods and diners, often with hilarious results, nothing tops the bandicoot's trip to "the house that Mario built," the American headquarters of Nintendo.



Crash is behind the wheel, unsure of where he's heading...

...but eventually finds the famous place he's looking for.

Crash Bandicoot. Sony went to ad industry stalwart TBWA Chiat/Day, which shaped a hip, irreverent approach to fit the colorful hero. The "Man in the Bandicoot Suit" campaign follows the humorous adventures of a Sony spokesman trapped inside a road-worn bandicoot costume. Each of the campaign's TV spots show our man dutifully making the rounds in a junkyard pickup, on a never-ending quest to promote the PlayStation. Along the highways and byways, he encounters various common folk, always taking time to spread the Sony gospel along the way. Still, the campaign's master-stroke (so far) has been sending the PlayStation evangelist right to the gates of the enemy camp—Nintendo's huge Seattle headquarters (see "Travels With Crash").

JOB INSECURITY

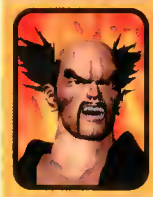
Is Crash Bandicoot the PlayStation's spokes-character? Despite showcasing him in expensive advertising, Sony has never *formally* recognized Crash as such, although he's already on the job and seems like the obvious choice for any number of reasons. Sony has been reticent, but we have a couple of pet theories on the subject:

- Maybe Sony isn't sure about Crash's ability to spark the rabid devotion that other spokes-characters have inspired. Sony could be waiting to see if a more charismatic character emerges naturally through another hit game.
- Perhaps Sony's misgivings have more to do with the game's genre. It's possible they think that the PlayStation's "top draw" games will come from other genres, like racers (*Formula 1, Jet Moto*), action/adventures (*Tomb Raider*), and RPGs (the upcoming *Final Fantasy VII*, appearing only on the PlayStation).

But that's just speculation. For now, while the existing campaign lasts, the PlayStation is being ably represented by an awkward orange marsupial. His job as system spokes-character is secure and the only danger he's currently facing comes from an evil scientist with an enormous head.

If Not Crash, Then Whom?

If Crash isn't the official PlayStation's spokes-character, that means the job is still open. Here's our short list of potential nominees, each of which could represent Sony's game box in commercials and print ads:



HEIHACHI (*Tekken* series)

Fight games come and go, but the balding, Fu Manchu-sporting Heihachi is one butt-kicker who's built to last. He's got enough moves and grit to lay waste to an entire army. Moreover, he's the punching, kicking picture of resilience; at the end of the first *Tekken*, you literally chuck him off a cliff...but even that doesn't faze this guy. Heihachi's so tough that when he returns unscathed in *Tekken 2*, we're not surprised that he comes back, only that now he's *stronger*

LARA (*Tomb Raider*)

As a politically correct choice for spokes-character, *TR*'s sexy archaeologist just won't quit. A true woman of the '90s, Lara can bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan, and then bean an enemy with the skillet (after pumping his carcass full of lead). The closest thing the PlayStation has to Indiana Jones, and she makes Harrison Ford look like Henry Ford.

NEEDLES KANE (*Twisted Metal* series)

For sheer presence, it's hard to top *Twisted Metal*'s sneering psycho/clown. Careening around in his wicked ice cream truck of death (the vanity plate reads "ISKREEM"), Needles sends instant shivers with every surprise appearance (just keep telling yourself he's only a videogame character). As a spokes-character, this guy would certainly be memorable. However, as a friendly, "feel-good" mascot, Needles needs work...and maybe a lobotomy.

JOHN MADDEN (*Madden* series)

Okay, so technically Madden isn't an animated character. Still, you've got to admit, few personalities (real or simulated) are as revved-up as the energetic sportscaster and Super Bowl-winning coach. Biggest advantages to making Madden the PlayStation's ambassador: 1) he already knows how to star in commercials, and; 2) John Madden requires far less time to program than other characters.

station's Character Spotlight

(number 1 in a series)

As the closest thing the PlayStation has to a mascot, Crash Bandicoot carries a lot of responsibility. Beyond that, though, he's a thoroughly interesting character. That's why we felt this marsupial deserved his own feature article.

Of course, Crash Bandicoot is just one of the PlayStation's notable characters. There are many more, and we want to showcase as many of them as we can.

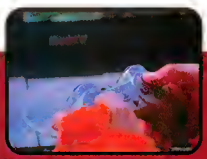
For this reason, each issue of station *will profile a different "personality" from the world of PlayStation gaming. We'll search all applicable game genres (some types of games aren't really based around characters, or characters that have distinct identities).*

Who are we looking for? Characters that engage us, amuse us, or even inspire us. Characters so vibrantly drawn that we're fooled into thinking of them as actual flesh and blood creatures. Characters with character.

Who will be spotlighted next issue? Tune in and find out...

It doesn't take long for Crash to start calling out "Plumber Boy"—

—and illustrating the PlayStation's clear superiority.



A little product demonstration never hurt, either.

No one's buying, but Crash makes a new friend (the security guard).

net yaroze:

the tools of creation

Ever suffered through a disappointing game, while knowing you could have designed it better than the developers did? Now, thanks to Sony, you've got your chance. For the first time ever, players are able to create their own games for a console system.

But is Net Yaroze for everyone?

The Short Version

Here's the nutshell explanation of Net Yaroze: It's an affordable game development system that anyone can use to design and program their own PlayStation games. In theory, homemade titles produced on the system can be sold to an established software publisher, who might then take the original creation, polish it up, and resell it to the masses. With the Net Yaroze development kit, it's possible for an amateur to launch a career as a game developer.

This is all true—but explanations are needed. Several of them.

Chasing the Dream

Already available in Japan and Europe, Sony's new Net Yaroze PlayStation system puts serious programming power right into your hands. The heart of this system is the "Black Box," a special version of the standard PlayStation console. Yaroze programmers use the Black Box in conjunction with their own PC or Mac computer, a data compiler, and various development-oriented software programs. (For a complete listing of what the Net Yaroze package includes, see "Comes With Everything You See Here...")

Because Net Yaroze will sell for around $1,000, Sony isn't viewing the system (scheduled for March availability) as a commercial product and therefore, it won't be sold in retail outlets. To get a system, interested gamers must first become members of the Net Yaroze "club," then buy the hardware and software directly from Sony, either by phone or online purchase.

Obviously, the vast majority of gamers could not afford to develop games, because of the enormous budgets required to create and program console games. Nevertheless, there's no reason why an average gamer (many of whom have been playing since gaming's earliest days) couldn't come up with a winning concept that deserves exploration as a video game. It's this untapped pool of talent that Sony is targeting with Net Yaroze.

"Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) hopes to restore the era that people can affordably chase the dream of becoming a video game creator," said Don Thomas, of Sony's Research & Development division. "SCEA wants to give them that opportunity."

Membership Has Its Privileges

The word "Yaroze" (pronounced Ya-row-zey) is a Japanese idiom meaning "let's do it together" and that's the key to the system. In fact, it's more accurate to describe Net Yaroze as a total development membership package.

While the programming aspect may seem a bit daunting at first, there's plenty of help available on the Internet. Net Yaroze members will have access to on-line help via a World Wide Web site with dedicated support, file downloading, and message venues. Members also have access to the codes and demos other members have developed and are sharing on the online forums. Web site access is limited to one year, but is renewable for a modest fee, according to SCEA.

Reality Check

Net Yaroze is meant as a serious programming tool and not some kind of "deluxe edition" PlayStation. If interested parties have any doubts about their familiarity with the C programming language, SCEA urges that they not consider joining Net Yaroze—at least not until they're sure they're capable of taking on serious development projects. Nor should prospective users figure they can learn how to churn code while building their first game; Sony makes it explicitly clear that the Net Yaroze package contains no materials for teaching C programming.

Furthermore, there's no "trial-basis" purchase. Sony will back all manufactured products, including Net Yaroze's physical components, but won't make refunds to users who realize post-purchase that designing a videogame is no walk through the park or those users who lose interest for other reasons. In other words, once you buy it—it's yours.

Another caveat: Prospective programmers shouldn't assume they're going to be getting access to the same programming components that licensed PlayStation programmers use. Sony's commercial programming package is much more intensive (and expensive) and includes on-site assistance and on-call technical help, services which are not part of the Net Yaroze membership program.

The Net Yaroze system has some technical boundaries, too. The combination of game code, graphics, audio samples, and run-time libraries for any one game cannot exceed the PlayStation's 3.5 megs of RAM ▶

Minimum Computer Requirements

It should go without saying, but you do need to use a computer in conjunction with your Net Yaroze system. Keep in mind these are minimum requirements, and those seeking smoother performance should consider upgrading their systems above these specs. Minimum PC requirements include:

- **A 486 DX2 66MHz IBM-compatible PC, with one or more Serial Ports**
- **A 28.8-kbps Modem and an Internet Connection**
- **A 2X CD-ROM**
- **10MB of hard disk space, and 4MB of RAM**
- **An SVGA Monitor**
- **A Mouse**

(If you're running a Macintosh, you need *Code Warrior*, the complete development environment produced by Metroworks Software. Sony will be releasing more info about using the Macintosh in conjunction with Net Yaroze—check the next issue of *station* for more details.)

(because special drivers must be installed). Of course, when you consider that some of the PlayStation's hottest titles fit comfortably within that format (think *Ridge Racer*), it's clear that this is not a serious limitation.

Because of the many legal and technical issues involved, games developed on the Net Yaroze system cannot be played on other "regular" (i.e., gray) PlayStation consoles.

However, other Net Yaroze system owners will be able to check out your handiwork on their systems via Sony's online Net Yaroze Forum, and "amateur" developers interested in pursuing their prospects in the marketplace can do just that, provided they adhere to all legal restraints and follow the appropriate legal procedures of licensing and copyrighting in cooperation with Sony's guidelines.

Clearly, Net Yaroze is not intended for the casual PlayStation gamer, but for skilled amateur developers whose main obstacle to pursuing their ideas has been finding the financial resources to get started.

Net Profits

According to Don Thomas (Sony R & D), there were several reasons why Sony started the Net Yaroze program, like fostering good public relations with a specialized segment of their gaming audience.

"The advantage to them is the freedom to develop great things on a great video game platform," Don Thomas says. "The advantage to SCEA is multi-faceted, beginning with the goodwill it generates to make it possible for these people to be recognized in some way."

To say nothing of the potentially great games that could find their way to the PlayStation.

This, of course, is what's in it for Sony (in addition to the various cash profits to be realized from Net Yaroze): Right of first refusal on the next surprise hit game that comes down the line. For gamers, Net Yaroze offers an opportunity to develop for the PlayStation's enormous potential without meeting the constraints of a budget.

Of course, if gamers want to use Net Yaroze as a platform for starting careers in game development, it's important they consider the same factors that the pros face as they come up new games: popularity of the genre, concept freshness, and potential audience. The PlayStation has clearly upped the ante for graphics and sound; the result has been a trend toward engaging virtual-world gameplay that offers a wealth of intricacies, speed, challenge, and surprise. Serious would-be developers would do well to keep these trends firmly in mind.

Amateur programmers with stars (and dollar signs) in their eyes should remember something else, too: A significant percentage of commercially developed titles never make it to retail shelves, much less the best-seller list. So, while odds are very much against your game becoming the next *Doom*, hope springs eternal. And if being a game developer is really your dream, Net Yaroze could help you make that dream come true.

Remember, we said "could"—not "will."

"Comes With Everything You See Here..."

(Keep in mind that Net Yaroze is a membership package, and one of its most important components is *access*—specifically to the multilayered Net Yaroze network.)

Here are Net Yaroze's physical components:

- The "Black Box" PlayStation Console
- An R3000 C Compiler and Debugger
- A Comprehensive Set of Development Tools
- Interface Tools for PlayStation-compatible Memory Cards
- Software and Program Library CDs
- Manuals and Documentation (including a Library Reference)

(The Net Yaroze system package does not include library elements to accommodate linking cables, either for connecting a PC to a PlayStation or hooking up two PlayStation systems for head-to-head gaming. SCEA has suggested that Net Yaroze members will probably address this issue with their own creative solutions.)

"Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) hopes to restore the era that people can affordably chase the dream of becoming a video game creator. SCEA wants to give them that opportunity."

—Don Thomas
Research & Development Division
Sony Computer Entertainment America

Hooking up with Sony

If you've got "programming fever" and want to learn more about Net Yaroze, contact SCEA at:

US and Canada:
yarozeinfo_scea@interactive.sony.com

Europe and Australia:
ps_yaroze@interactive.sony.com

Japan:
ny-info@scei.co.jp

(Sony prefers that inquiries be made via e-mail. After all, if you don't have an Internet connection, you won't be able to get much out of the Net Yaroze program.)

COMPANY INFO

Location		
64 Willow Place, Menlo Park, CA, 94025-3691		
Telephone	*Fax*	*Website*
(415) 473-3400	(415) 473-4985	www.crystald.com
Personnel	*Founded*	
75	1993	
Stock Listing	*Notable Achievement*	
N/A (Private Company)	*Crash 'N Burn*, Crystal Dynamics' first release, was also the first 32-bit game...ever.	

"Any first-generation software is going to go through a period where the hardware is in its infant stages and has yet to really have the mass consumer acceptance. We've gone through that early launch cycle with the PlayStation."

—Scott Steinberg, VP of Marketing, Crystal Dynamics

Ten Questions with Crystal Dynamics

Scott Steinberg was the 21st employee hired by Crystal Dynamics, and has been with the company through almost all of its history. We spoke with Crystal's VP of Marketing recently...

You guys were closely linked with 3DO. When did you move away from that platform?

Our first title was *Crash 'n' Burn*. It was packed in with the original 3DO machine. We were involved in the 3DO business until it became clear that the system was no longer commercially viable. At that point, we had received a development station for the Sony PlayStation...touted to be more powerful and more sophisticated across the board than the 3DO machine.

Had you originally intended to develop just for the 3DO platform?

The strategy for Crystal Dynamics from the outset was to be "platform agnostic" and to look to shipping our software on all the viable next-generation platforms. We were not going to be a 16-bit company. We were focusing our development resources on the 32-bit systems, and beyond that. 3DO happened to be the first one to hit the market.

How does Crystal Dynamics see itself now?

We've adopted an entertainment software studio model. Simply, that means that Crystal Dynamics, which still has a very significant base of capital, funds its own development efforts, funds its own marketing operations, and looks to partner with distribution leaders (such as an Electronic Arts or an Activision) to handle the physical and retail efforts that surround getting a product into the marketplace.

Some have called *Pandemonium!* your answer to *Mario*. Do you think that's a fair assessment?

I would have to say that we're the 32-bit version of *Sonic the Hedgehog*, quite frankly. We're much more kinetic, much faster-paced. We're more analogous to *Sonic* than we are to *Mario*.

How do you see the "Platform Wars" evolving?

Sony has a wide lead in front of the Saturn. The N64, in its first month, did some phenomenal business. I would say it's definitely shaping up to be a Sony/Nintendo war for '97, with PC still being a significant player. From the console standpoint, it looks like Sony and Nintendo are going to lock horns in the way that two equals go at it.

What lessons have you learned about developing for 32-bit systems?

Development expenses are 2 1/2 times what they were in 16-bit, and the development cycle is a good 2X what it was in 16-bit, if not 3X, depending on the title.

Will Crystal Dynamics be developing for the N64?

When we were dealing with inventory costs, and costs of goods, and royalty payments to hardware companies, I would have told you "absolutely not." Now that we're dealing with a (business) model that does not include inventory problems and costs of goods and royalty issues, we are looking at the N64 very closely. It's absolutely a possibility.

What advantages do you see in developing for disc instead of cartridge?

The difference between dealing in 2-D sprites and 3-D polygons is pretty dramatic, and CD's are such great receptacles for data. With the ability in a first generation product (*3-D Baseball*) to have 22,000 frames of animation, we think that on the second product (which we're planning on shipping for the baseball season next year), we can do some even more meaningful motion capturing and build another layer of realism into the player movements. The fact that there's a CD there and you're not balancing memory with the old cartridge game is pretty important.

As an industry insider, what do you think has proven most interesting about the PlayStation?

Any first-generation software is going to go through a period where the hardware is in its infant stages and has yet to really have the mass consumer acceptance. We've gone through that early launch cycle with the PlayStation. The difference between the PlayStation and the early Super Nintendo or early Sega Genesis is a lot more software out there for the first year of the hardware's life. That's unprecedented in this industry, I think.

You guys will be producing games based on two Marvel comics characters, *Ghost Rider* and *The Punisher*. How are those games coming along? Do you have any other games to announce?

We're still in the start-up stages with those products. The next crop of announcements you're going to see from us are going to be about original products and original characters, and we're pretty excited about our ability to come up with unique characters with unique gameplay mechanics. So our focus in the next year or so is going to be about coming up with a new batch of characters, and continuing to sequelize those that are commercially well-accepted. I will give you this little tid-bit: Our sequel to *GEX* is in the works right now and is demonstrating a whole new 3-D technology.

Product Profile

Although Mario-like, Crystal Dynamics says *Pandemonium!*'s speed owes more to a certain hyper hedgehog.

What's *3D Baseball* got besides Jose Canseco? Try 22,000 thrilling frames of animation.

The murky, spooky *Legacy of Kain* should find a receptive audience when it's ported over to the PC.

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

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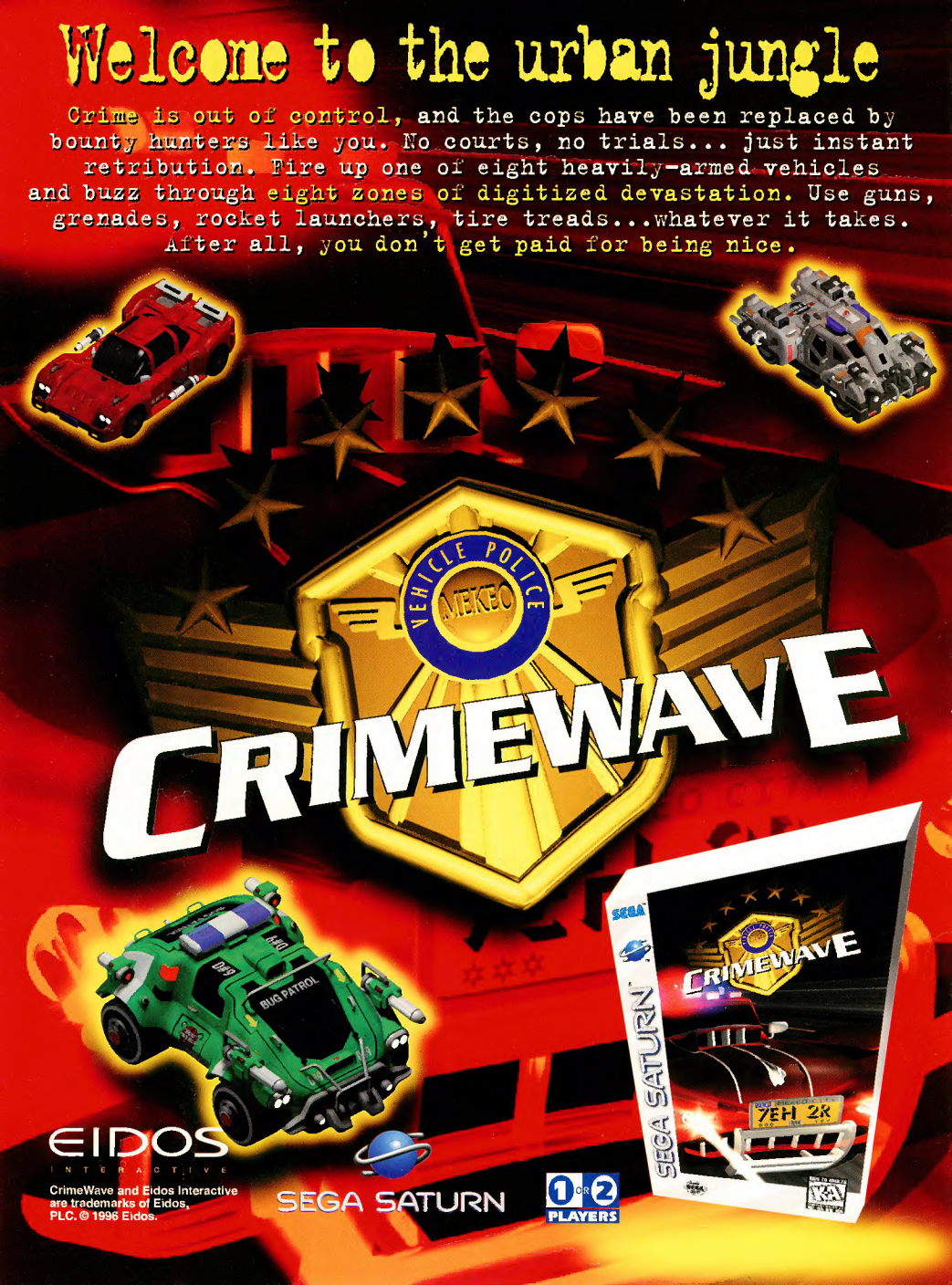

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PlayStation Web Sites

Developer	Web Address
Acclaim	www.aklm.com
Accolade	www.accolade.com
ASC Games	www.ascgames.com
Ascii Entertainment	www.asciient.com
Atlus Software	www.atlus.com
Capcom	www.capcoment.com
Capcom of Japan*	www.capcom.co.jp
Crystal Dynamics	www.crystald.com
Data East	www.dataeast.com
Electronic Arts	www.ea.com
Fox Interactive	www.foxinteractive.com
Gremlin Interactive	www.gremlin.com
GT Interactive	www.gtinteractive.com
Interplay	www.interplay.com
Jaleco	www.jaleco.com
Konami	www.konami.com
Maxis	www.maxis.com
Metrowerks	www.metrowerks.com
Mindscape	www.mindscape.com
Namco	www.namco.com
Naughty Dog	www.naughtydog.com
Ocean of America	www.oceanltd.com
Psygnosis	www.psygnosis.com
Ready Soft	www.readysoft.com
SCEA	www.sony.com
Shiny Entertainment	www.shiny.com
Single Trac Entertainment	www.singletrac.com
Sony's PlayStation Site	www.sepc.sony.com/SCEA/arena/arena.html
Square of Japan	www.square.co.jp
SSI	www.ssionline.com
Take 2 Interactive	www.take2games.com
Team 17	www.team17.com
T*HQ	www.thq.com
Time Warner	pathfinder.com./@@Hw6ibwYANz@rf5rs/twi
Trimark	www.trimarkint.com
UbiSoft	www.ubisoft.com/us.html
Viacom	www.viacomnewmedia.com
Virgin	www.vie.com
Virtual Music	www.virtualmusic.com
Williams	www.williamsentertainment.com

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